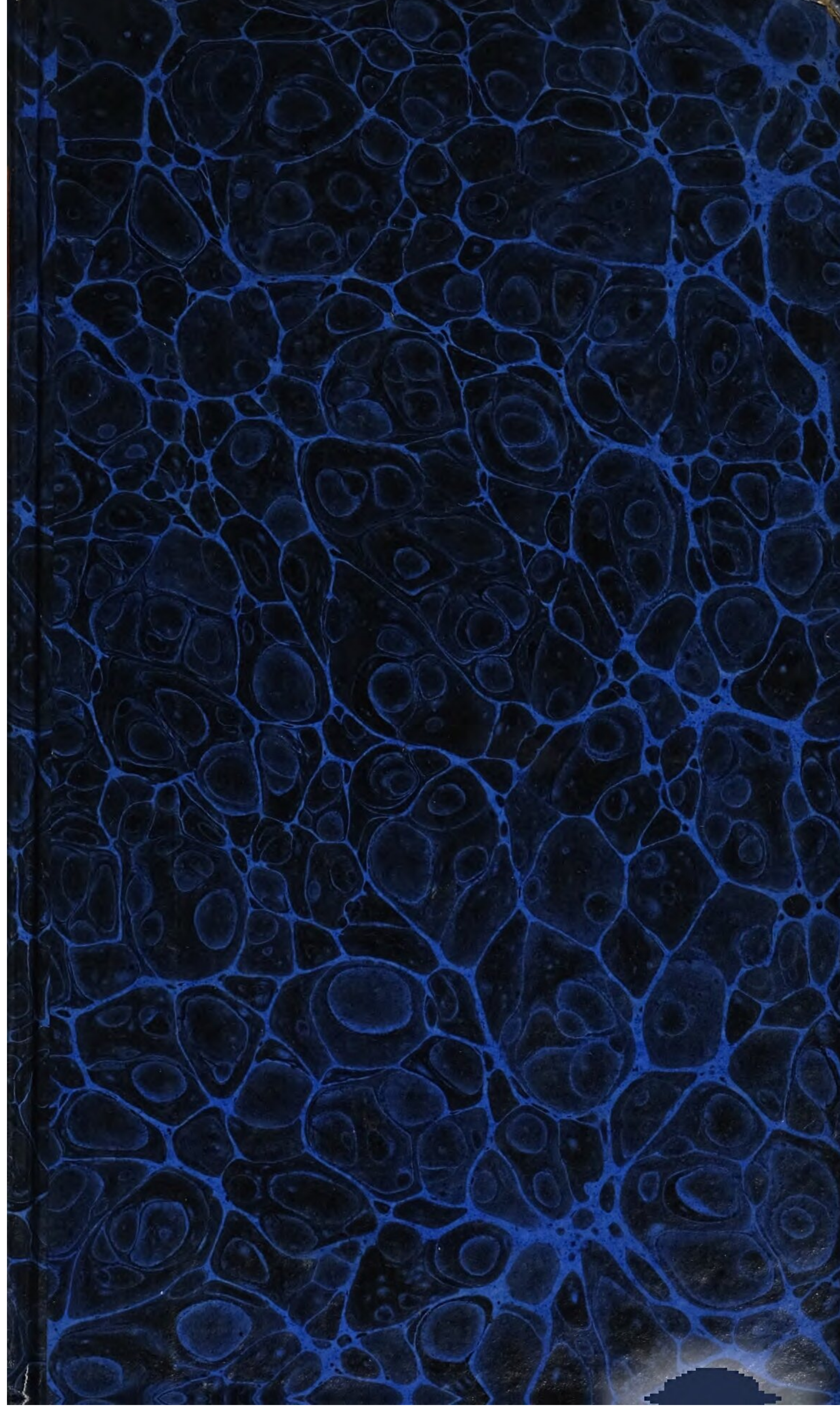




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THE
ADVENTURES
OF
G I L B L A S,
OF SANTILLANE.

Translated
BY T. SMOLLET, M. D.
AUTHOR OF RODERICK RANDOM.

VOL. III.

London,
printed for the Booksellers
and sold
by F. W A L T H E R.

Dresden, 1806.

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ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF SANTILLANE.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

The Amours of Gil Blas and Dame Lorença Sephora.

I went accordingly to Xelva, to make restitution of the three thousand ducats which we had stolen from Samuel Simon; and will freely own, I was tempted on the road to convert the money to my own use, in order to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. This I might have done with impunity; for, had I travelled five or six days, and then returned, as if I had acquitted myself of my commission, Don Alphonso and his father would never have suspected my fidelity. I did not yield, however, to the temptation, but surmounted it like a lad of honour; a victory not a little com-

mendable in a young fellow, who had associated with great cheats. There are a great many, who, though acquainted with honest people only, are not so scrupulous; those, especially, who are intrusted with sums, which they may keep without interesting their reputation.

Having made restitution to the merchant, who expected nothing less, I returned to the castle of Leyva, which the Count de Polan having left, had set out again for Toledo, with Julia and Don Ferdinand. I found my new master more captivated than ever with Seraphina; his Seraphina enchanted by him; and Don Caesar charmed with the possession of them both. I endeavoured to gain the friendship of that tender father, and succeeded: I became steward of the family, regulated every thing in it, received money from the farmers, disbursed for the expence of house-keeping, and had a despotic power over all the servants. But, contrary to the usual practice of stewards, I did not abuse my power. I did not turn away those domestics who displeased me, nor expected that the rest should be entirely devoted to my will: if they addressed themselves directly to Don Caesar, or his son, when they wanted any favour, far from thwarting their interest, I always spoke in their behalf; besides, the marks of affection which I every moment received from my masters, inspired me

with zeal for their service; and I had nothing but their interest in view. There was no legerdemain in my administration; and I was such a steward as is not every day to be met with. While I enjoyed the happiness of my condition, Love, as if he had been jealous of what Fortune had done for me, had a mind that I should owe some favours to him also; and produced in the heart of Dame Lorença Sephora, chief waiting-woman to Seraphina, a violent inclination for master steward. My conquest (to relate things like a faithful historian) glanced upon her fiftieth year; but a lively look, an agreeable countenance, and two fine eyes, which she knew how to use to the best advantage, might be said to make her still pass for the object of an intrigue: I could have wished only for a few roses in her complexion, for she was extremely pale; a circumstance which I did not fail to attribute to the austerity of celibacy.

The lady practised upon me a long time by looks, in which her passion was painted; but, instead of answering her glances, I at first seemed not to perceive her design; by which behaviour I appeared to her as a novice in gallantry, a discovery that she did not dislike. Imagining, therefore, that she ought no longer to confine herself to the language of the eyes, with a young man whom she believed less knowing than he was, during the very first conversation we

had together, she declared her sentiments in form, that I might not be ignorant of them for the future. This she performed like one who had been at school. She feigned to be disconcerted while she spoke to me; and, after having freely expressed all that she had to say, hid her face, to make me believe she was ashamed of letting me see her weakness. There was no resisting; and, though I was determined more by vanity than inclination, I showed myself very sensible of her affection: I even affected to be urgent; and acted the passionate lover so well, that I attracted her reproaches. Lorença reproved me, but with so much gentleness, that, while she recommended moderation to me, she seemed not at all sorry at my want of it. I should have pushed things still farther, if the beloved object had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue, by granting me a victory too cheap. We therefore parted till another occasion: Sephora, persuaded that her false resistance made me look upon her as a ves-
sial; and I, elevated with the sweet hope of bringing the adventure soon to a conclusion.

My affairs were in this situation, when one of Don Caesar's lackies told me a piece of news, which moderated my joy. This young fellow was one of those curious domestics, who make it their business to discover what passes in the family. As he was very assiduous in paying his court to

me, and regaled me every day with something new, he came one morning and told me, that he had made a pleasant discovery, which he would communicate to me on condition that I should keep it secret; because it regarded Dame Lorença Sephora, whose resentment (he said) he was afraid of incurring. I was too eager to hear what he had to say, not to promise secrecy; but, without seeming to be the least concerned, I asked him, with all the indifference I could affect, what the discovery was with which he intended to entertain me. 'Lorença,' said he, 'every evening privately admits into her apartment the surgeon of the village, a very stout young fellow; and the rogue always remains with her a considerable time. I am willing to believe,' added he, with a satirical smile, 'that this behaviour may be very innocent; but you must allow, that a young man who slips so mysteriously into a maid's chamber, gives a handle to scandal to be very free with her character.'

Although this report gave me as much pain as if I had been actually in love I took care to conceal my vexation; I even constrained myself so much, as to laugh at the news that pierced me to the very soul. But I indemnified myself for that constraint, as soon as I saw myself alone. I cursed, I swore, and mused upon the resolution I should take. Sometimes

despising Lorença, I proposed to abandon her, without even deigning to come to an explanation with the coquette; and sometimes imagining that I was bound in honour to banish the surgeon from the house. I formed the design of challenging him to single combat: this last resolution prevailed. I lay in ambush towards the evening; and, sure enough, perceived my man enter with a mysterious air into the apartment of my duenna. This was necessary to support my fury. I went out of the castle, and posted myself on the road by which my gallant must return: here I waited for him without flinching, and every moment the desire of fighting with him increased. At length my enemy appeared, and I went forward some yards like a Drawcanfir; but I do not know how the devil it happened, I found myself all of a sudden seized, like one of Homer's heroes, with an emotion of fear that arrested my steps; and I stood as much confounded as Paris, when he presented himself to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man, who seemed strong and vigorous; and his sword appeared to be of an excessive length. All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, out of a point of honour, or otherwise, though I saw the danger with magnifying eyes; and, in spite of nature, which made obstinate efforts to make me desist, I had the boldness to advance towards the surgeon, and unsheath my rapier.

Surprized at my action, he cried —
'What is the matter Mr. Gil Blas? what is
'the meaning of these demonstrations? You
'are pleased to be merry, I suppose?' — 'No,
'Mr. Barber,' I replied, 'you are mistaken;
'I am in a very serious humour, and want
'to know, whether or not you are as brave
'as gallant. You must not expect that I
'will let you possess in tranquillity the fa-
'vours of the lady whom you visit at the
'castle.' — 'By St. Come! *) said the sur-
geon, bursting into a loud laugh, 'here is
'a pleasant adventure. Egad! appearan-
'ces are very deceitful.' From these words,
imagining that he was as little inclined to
fight as I, I became more insolent, and
said — 'Friend, that won't pass; don't think
'that I will be satisfied with a simple de-
'nial.' — 'I see, then,' answered he, 'that I
'shall be obliged to speak, in order to pre-
'vent the mischief which might happen to
'you or me; and I must reveal a secret,
'although people of our profession cannot
'be too discreet. If Dame Lorença admits
'me by stealth into her apartment, it is
'with a view of concealing her distemper
'from the servants; she has an inveterate
'cancer in her back, which I dress every
'evening. This is the cause of the visits
'which alarm you; so that you may hence-

*) St. Come was a physician and martyr; therefore pro-
perly invoked by the surgeon.

‘forth keep your heart at ease. Though,
‘added he, ‘if you are not satis-
‘fied with this declaration, but absolutely
‘bent upon coming to points, speak the
‘word; I am your man.’ So saying, he
drew his long rapier, which made me shi-
ver; and put himself upon his guard.
‘Enough,’ said I to him, sheathing my
sword; ‘I am not a brute, to refuse to hear
‘reason; after what you have told me, you
‘are no longer my enemy; let us embrace.’

At this discourse, which showed him
that I was not such a devil as I at first appear-
ed to be, he laughed, put up his rapier,
gave me his hand; and, in short, we part-
ed the best friends in the world.

From that moment, Sephora presented
nothing but disagreeable ideas to my ima-
gination: I avoided every opportunity she
gave me of conversing with her in private;
and that with such care and affectation, that
she perceived my disgust. Astonished at
such a change, she resolved to know the
cause; and at length, finding an occasion to
speak with me apart—‘Mr. Steward!’ said
she, ‘pray tell me why you avoid the sight
‘of me? It is true, I made some advances,
‘but you made suitable returns. Recollect,
‘if you please, the private conversation we
‘had together: you was then all fire, but
‘now you are all ice. What is the meaning
‘of all this?’ This was a very delicate que-

sion for a plain man; consequently, it embarrassed me not a little. I do not remember the answer which I made; but it displeased her very much, and that was enough. Sephora, though, by her sweet modest air, one would have taken her for a lamb, was a very tigress when her wrath prevailed. 'I thought,' said she, darting at me a look full of spite and rage, 'that I did a great deal of honour to a little fellow like you, in discovering to him those sentiments which noble cavaliers would have gloried in exciting: but I am justly punished for having unworthily abused them to a wretched adventurer.' Had she stopped here, I should have thought myself cheaply quit. Her tongue, obedient to her fury, honoured me with an hundred epithets, every one more bitter than another. I ought to have heard them in cool blood: and reflected, that in disdaining the triumph of her virtue, which I had attempted, I committed a crime that no woman can forgive. But I was too passionate to bear reproaches, at which a sensible man, in my place, would have laughed; and my patience forsaking me—'Madam,' said I, 'we ought not to despise any body: if those noble cavaliers of whom you speak, had seen your back, I am sure their curiosity would have proceeded no farther.' I had no sooner uttered this repartee, than the furious duenna gave me the rudest box on the ear that

ever an affronted woman bestowed. I did not wait for a second; but, by a speedy flight, avoided a shower of blows that would certainly have fallen upon my carcass.

I thanked Heaven, when I found myself extricated out of this troublesome affair; and imagined I had nothing more to fear, since the lady had revenged herself. I thought that, for her own honour, she would never mention the adventure; and, indeed, fifteen days elapsed before I heard any thing of the matter. I myself began to forget it, when I understood that Sephora was ill. I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news; I pitied the lady; and believing, that not being able to overcome a passion so ill requited, she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love, I reflected with sorrow that I was the cause of her indisposition, and at least lamented the duenna, if I could not love her. How much was I mistaken in my opinion! Her tenderness changed into hate; and, at that time, her whole study was to do me mischief.

One morning, being alone with Don Alphonso, and observing that young gentleman pensive and sad, I begged, in a respectful manner, to know the cause. 'I am 'chagrined,' said he, 'to find Seraphina 'weak, ungrateful, and unjust. You are 'astonished at this information,' added he, perceiving that I listened with surprize;

‘and yet nothing is more true. I don’t
‘know what cause you may have given Da-
‘me Lorença to hate you; but you are as-
‘suredly become so odious to her, that if
‘you don’t leave the castle with the utmost
‘dispatch, her death, she says, will be in-
‘evitable. You ought not to doubt that Se-
‘raphina, who has a regard for you, at first
‘revolted against a hate which she could not
‘gratify without injustice and ingratitude.
‘But, in short, she is a woman: she has a
‘tender affection for Sephora, who brought
‘her up; and that governante is a sort of
‘mother to her, whose death she would re-
‘proach herself with, if she was not weak
‘enough to satisfy this her desire: as for my
‘part, notwithstanding the love that attach-
‘es me to Seraphina, I shall never have
‘the base complaisance to adhere to her sen-
‘timents on this subject. Perish all the
‘duennas in Spain, before I consent to the
‘removal of a young man whom I consider
‘more as a brother than a domestic!’

Alphonso having spoken thus, I said to
him — ‘Signior, I was born to be the sport
‘of Fortune! I thought she would have cea-
‘sed to persecute me in your house, where
‘every thing flattered me with quiet and
‘happy days; but how agreeable soever my
‘situation may be, I find I must give it
‘up.’ — ‘Not at all!’ cried the generous son
‘of Don Caesar; ‘leave me to make Sera-

‘phina hear reason: it shall never be said, that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, to whom too much deference has been paid in other respects.’

‘Sir,’ said I, ‘you will only provoke Seraphina, in resisting her will. I had much rather retire, than, by a longer stay in this place, run the risk of breeding any division between such a happy pair: that would be a misfortune for which I should never be consoled.’

Don Alphonso forbade me to take any such resolution; and I saw him so fixed in the design of supporting me, that Lorença would undoubtedly have met with a rebuff, if I had been minded to oppose her. At certain times, being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her; but when I came to consider, that in revealing her shame, I should stab the heart of a poor creature whose indisposition I was the occasion of; and that two incurable distempers visibly conducted her to the grave, my resentment was changed into compassion; and I concluded, that since I was such a dangerous mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish, by my retreat, the tranquillity of the castle. This resolution I executed the very next morning before day, without bidding adieu to my two masters; lest, through friendship for me, they should oppose my departure. I contented myself with



Allen del

Heinrich Schmitt sc 1798. J. A. Darnstedt direx.

with leaving in my chamber a writing, wherein was contained an exact account of my administration.

CHAP. II.

The Fate of Gil Blas, after he quitted the Castle of Leyva, and the happy Consequence that attended the bad Success of his Amours.

I was mounted on a good horse of my own, with two hundred pistoles in my portmanteau, the best part of which I had got by the banditti whom we flew, and the share of the three thousand ducats which had been stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso, without making me restore what I had fingered, had made restitution of the whole sum out of his own pocket. Wherefore, considering my effects as wealth become lawful, I enjoyed it without scruple. I was in possession of a fund, therefore, which did not allow me to be much concerned for the future, over and above the confidence which one of my age always has in his own merit: besides, Toledo presented an agreeable asylum; for I did not at all doubt that the Count de Polan would be pleased with an opportunity of obliging one of his deliverers with a kind reception, and an apartment in his house. But this nobleman I looked upon as my last resource;

Gil Bl. Vol. III.

B

and resolved, before I should apply to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdom of Murcia and Granada, which I longed particularly to see. With this design I set out for Almanza, whence continuing my journeying, I went from city to city, as far as Granada, *) without meeting any bad accident. Fortune, satisfied with having played me so many tricks, seemed willing at length to leave me in quiet: but for all that, she was then hatching a great many more, as will be seen in the sequel. One of the first persons I met in the streets of Granada, was Signior Don Fernando de Leyva, who was, as well as Don Alphonso, son-in-law to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprized at seeing one another in that place. ‘Gil Blas!’ cried he, ‘how came you to be in this city? ‘What business brings you hither?’ — ‘Signior,’ said I, ‘if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be much more so when you hear the cause of my quitting the service of Signior Don Caesar and his son.’ Then I recounted all that had passed between Sephora and me, without the least disguise. He laughed heartily at the adventure; then growing serious again — ‘Friend,’ said he, ‘I offer you my mediation in this affair, and will write to

*) Granada, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same name.

‘my sister-in-law.’ — ‘By no means, Signior,’ said I, interrupting him, ‘pray don’t write; for I did not leave the castle of Leyva with any intention to return. Make, if you please, another use of the regard you have for me; and if any one of your friends has occasion for a secretary or steward, I beg you will speak to him in my favour. I dare assure you, that you shall have no cause to repent of your recommendation.’ ‘With all my heart,’ he replied, ‘I will do what you desire: I am come to Granada to visit an old aunt who is sick, and I shall stay here three weeks longer; at the end of which, I shall set out on my return to my castle at Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge here, added he, showing me a house about an hundred yards from us; ‘come and call on me some hours hence; by which time, perhaps, I shall have discovered some suitable post for you.’

And, indeed, at our very next meeting, he said — ‘The Archbishop of Granada, my kinsman and friend, wants a young man of letters, possessed of a good hand, to make fair copies of his writings; for he is a great author, has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more every day, which he pronounces with applause. As I believe you are such an one as he wants, I proposed you to him, and he has promised to take you into his service. Go

‘and present yourself to him, in my name:
‘and you may judge, by the reception
‘which you shall receive, whether or not I
‘have spoken in your behalf.’

This was such a place as I desired: wherefore, having dressed to the best advantage, in order to appear before that prelate, I repaired one morning to the archbishop’s palace. Here, was I to imitate the authors of romance, I should give a pompous description of this episcopal palace of Granada; I would enlarge upon the structure of the building, extol the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, and not spare the readers the least tittle of the stories they represented: but I shall content myself with observing, that it equalled the royal palace in magnificence.

I found in my apartments a crowd of ecclesiastics, and gentlemen of the sword, the greatest part whereof were the officers of his grace; his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and valets de chambre. The laity were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks, and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing, and ridiculing them within myself. Egad! said I, ‘these
‘people are very happy in bearing the yoke
‘of servitude, without feeling it; for, in
‘short, if they felt it, I imagine that their

‘behaviour would be less assuming.’ Addressing myself to a grave jolly personage that stood at the door of the archbishop’s closet, in order to open and shut it when there was occasion, I asked civilly if I could not speak with his grace. ‘Wait,’ said he dryly, ‘till his grace comes out to go to mass, and he will give you a moment’s audience in passing.’ I armed myself with patience, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with some of the officers: but they began to examine me from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable: and then looked at one another, smiling with disdain, at the liberty which I had taken to mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets; and had scarce recollected myself from the confusion in which I was, when the closet-door opened, and the archbishop appeared.

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers; who, all of a sudden, laid aside their insolent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty and ninth year, pretty much of the make of my uncle Canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short: he was very much bandy-legged into the bargain, and so bald, that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining on the back part of his head; for which reason, he was obliged to cover his head in a

new woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless, because I knew him to be one. We common people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them the air of greatness which nature has refused.

The archbishop, immediately advancing towards me, asked me what I wanted, with a voice full of sweetness; and I told him that I was the young man of whom Don Fernando de Leyva had spoken to him. He gave me no time to proceed; but cried — ‘O! you are the person, then, of whom he spoke so handsomely. I retain you in my service; you are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are.’ So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers; after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room, when the same officers who disdained my conversation courted it. They surrounded me, and with the utmost complaisance expressed their joy at seeing me become a commensal officer of the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained; but I was so malicious as to balk their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

His grace, returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet, that he might talk with me in private. I con-

cluded that his design in so doing was to try my understanding; and, accordingly, kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me on what is called humanity; and I did not answer amiss; he had occasion to see, that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He then put me upon logic, where I expected him, and found me quite master of that subject. ‘Your education,’ said he to me, with some surprize, ‘has not been neglected: let us now see your hand-writing.’ I thereupon took out of my pocket a sheet, which I had brought for the purpose; and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my performance. ‘I am satisfied with your hand,’ cried he, ‘and still more with your understanding. I shall thank my nephew Don Fernando for having given me such an able young man, whom I look upon as a real present.’

Being interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Granada, who came to dine with the archbishop, I left them together, and withdrew among the officers, who were quite profuse in their complaisance to me. I went to dinner at the usual time; and if they observed me at table, I did not fail to examine them also. What sagacity there is in the exteriors of churchmen! To me they appeared all saints; so much was my

mind over-awed by the place where I was; and I did not so much as suspect that there could be any false coin in the case: as if no such thing was ever seen among the princes of the church.

Being seated by an old valet de chambre, whose name was Melchior de la Ronda, he took great care to help me into the choice bits; and this attention, which he expressed for me, inspiring me with a respect for him, he was charmed with my polite behaviour. 'Signior Cavalier,' said he softly to me, after dinner, 'I want to have some private conversation with you.' At the same time he carried me to a part of the palace where nobody could overhear us, and there talked to me in this manner. 'Son, from the very first moment in which I saw you, I felt an inclination for you; of this I will give you a certain proof, by imparting something which may be of great advantage to you. You are here in a family, where true and false devotees live pell-mell; so that it will be an infinite time before you can, of yourself, be acquainted with the ground. But I will spare you such a tedious and disagreeable study, by discovering the characters of both; after which you may the more easily conduct yourself.

'I will begin,' added he, 'with his grace, who is a very pious prelate, incessantly

‘employed in edifying and reforming the
‘people, by sermons of his own compo-
‘sition, full of excellent morals. He quitted
‘the court above twenty years ago, in order
‘to devote himself entirely to his zeal for
‘his flock. He is a learned man, and a
‘great orator, whose sole pleasure consists
‘in preaching, and his hearers are ravished
‘with admiration. Perhaps there is a little
‘vanity in the case; but besides that it does
‘not belong to man, to penetrate the heart,
‘it would be ungrateful in me to enquire
‘into the faults of a person whose bread I
‘eat. If I was permitted to disapprove of
‘any thing in my master, I would blame
‘his severity. Instead of making an allow-
‘ance for ecclesiastical foibles, he punishes
‘them with too much rigour: in particular,
‘he prosecutes, without mercy, those who,
‘relying on their innocence, attempt to
‘justify themselves in a legal manner, in
‘contempt of his authority. I observe ano-
‘ther fault which is common to him with
‘a great many people of quality: although
‘he loves his domestics, he makes no con-
‘sideration for their services; but lets them
‘grow old, without ever thinking of procu-
‘ring for them some small settlement. If
‘he gives them some gratifications someti-
‘mes, they owe them solely to the good-
‘ness of somebody who has spoken in their
‘behalf; for it would never come into his
‘head to provide for them otherwise.’

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master; and he afterwards communicated his thoughts of the clergymen, with whom he had dined; pictures which but ill agreed with their external deportment. Indeed he did not represent them as dishonest men, but only as bad priests; excepting some, however, whose virtue he very much extolled. I was no longer at a loss how to regulate my features among those gentlemen: that very evening, at supper, I, like them, assumed a sage aspect—a task that costs nothing; so that we must not wonder that there are so many hypocrites in the world.

CHAP. III.

Gil Blas becomes the Favourite of the Archbishop and the Canal of his Bounty.

I had been in the afternoon to fetch my baggage and horse from the inn where I had lodged; after which I returned to supper at the palace, where I found a very handsome chamber and a down bed prepared for me. His grace ordered me to be called early next morning, and gave me a homily to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the

joy he expressed was mingled with surprize. 'Good Heaven' cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy, 'was ever any thing seen so correct! You transcribe so well, that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me, ingenuously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? some neglect, perhaps, in style, or improper term!' — 'O, Sir,' answered I, with an air of modesty, 'I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded the works of your grace would escape my censure.' The prelate smiled at my reply; and, though he said nothing, discovered, through all his piety, that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery I entirely gained his good graces; became more and more dear to him every day: and at length understood from Don Fernando, who visited him very often, that I was so much beloved, I might look upon my fortune as already made. This my master himself confirmed to me a little time after, on the following occasion. One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, an homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and, not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admi-

red. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favourite morceaux; by which means I passed in his judgment for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. 'This is,' cried he, 'what is called, having taste and sentiment: well, friend, I assure you, thou hast got Boeotian ears.' In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced with some vivacity — 'Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune; I undertake to make it extremely agreeable: I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant.'

I no sooner heard these words than I fell at his grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude: I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the highway to wealth and opulence. 'Yes, my child,' resumed the archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration; 'thou shalt be the repository of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say: my chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies; they touch the hearts of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance. I have sometimes the satisfaction to see a miser, terrified by the images which I represent to his avarice,

‘open his treasures, and squander them
‘with a prodigal hand. I have also torn, as
‘it were, the epicurean from his pleasures;
‘filled hermitages with the sons of ambi-
‘tion, and confirmed in her duty the wife
‘who has been shaken by the allurements of
‘a seducing lover. These conversions, which
‘are frequent, ought themselves to excite
‘my study: nevertheless, I will confess my
‘weakness, I propose to myself another re-
‘ward, a reward, which the delicacy of my
‘virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean,
‘the esteem that the world shows for fine
‘polished writing. The honour of being
‘reckoned a perfect orator has charmed my
‘imagination; my performances are thought
‘equally nervous and delicate; but I would,
‘of all things, avoid the fault of good au-
‘thors, who write too long, and retire with-
‘out forfeiting the least tittle of my reputa-
‘tion. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas,’ con-
‘tinued the prelate, ‘one thing that I exact
‘of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt per-
‘ceive my pen smack of old age, and my
‘genius flag, don’t fail to advertise me of
‘it: for I don’t trust to my own judgment,
‘which may be seduced by self-love. That
‘observation must proceed from a disinter-
‘ested understanding; and I make choice
‘of thine which I know is good, resolved to
‘stand to thy decision.’ — ‘Thank Heaven,
‘Sir,’ said I, ‘that period is far off: besides,
‘a genius like that of your grace will pre-

‘serve its vigour much better than any
‘other; or, to speak more justly, will be
‘always the same. I look upon you as ano-
‘ther Cardinal Ximenes, whose superior
‘genius, instead of being weakened by age,
‘seemed to receive new strength from it.’
— ‘No flattery, friend,’ said he, interrupt-
‘ing me; ‘I know I am liable to sink all
‘at once: people at my age begin to
‘feel infirmities; and the infirmities
‘of the body often affect the understand-
‘ing. I repeat it to thee again, Gil
‘Blas; as soon as thou shalt judge mine in
‘the least impaired, be sure to give me no-
‘tice; and be not afraid of speaking freely
‘and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice
‘as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy
‘interest is concerned; if, unhappily for
‘thee, it should come to my ears that the
‘public says my discourses have no longer
‘their wonted force, and that it is high
‘time for me to repose myself, I frankly
‘declare, that thou shalt lose my friendship,
‘as well as the fortune, I have promised.
‘Such will be the fruit of thy foolish re-
‘serve.’

Here my patron left off speaking, in order to hear my reply; which was, a promise to behave according to his desire. From that moment he concealed nothing from me, I became his favourite; an event which none of his domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, could perceive without

envy. It was a diverting scene, to behold the manner in which the gentlemen and squires then lived with the confidant of his grace: they were not ashamed to be guilty of grovelling meannesses, in order to captivate my good will. I could scarce believe they were Spaniards: though I did them good offices, without being the dupe of their selfish complaisance. His grace the archbishop, at my request, exerted himself in their favour: to one he procured a company, and put him in a condition to make a figure in the army; another he sent to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable post which he had obtained for him; and my friend Melchior, through my means, enjoyed a handsome gratification. This condescension convinced me, that though the prelate did not anticipate people's desires, he rarely refused any favour that was asked.

But what I did for a certain priest, deserves, in my opinion, to be told: one day, a licentiate, whose name was Lewis Garcias, a young man of a very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward; who said — 'Signior Gil Blas, this honest clergyman is one of my best friends; he was chaplain of a nunnery; and his virtue has not escaped scandal: some people have done him ill offices with his grace, who has suspended him, and is unhappily so much prejudiced against him, that he will

‘listen to no solicitation in his behalf. We
‘have employed, to no purpose, all the
‘persons of rank in Granada, to beg that
‘he may be re-established; but our master
‘is quite inflexible.’

‘Gentlemen,’ said I, ‘you have gone the
‘wrong way to work; it would have been
‘better for Mr. Licentiate if no solicitation
‘had been made; for, in their endeavours
‘to serve him, they have done him a mani-
‘fest injury. I am well acquainted with
‘his grace; entreaties and recommenda-
‘tions serve only to aggravate, in his opi-
‘nion, the fault of an ecclesiastic. It was
‘but t’other day I heard him say to him-
‘self—“The more people a priest, who has
“been guilty of irregularity, engages to
“speak to me in his behalf, the more is the
“scandal augmented, and the more seve-
“rity do I exercise.”—‘That is unfortunate,’
‘replied the steward; and my friend would
‘be very much embarrassed, if he was not
‘blessed with a good hand: happily for him,
‘he writes to admiration; and, by the help
‘of that talent, keeps himself out of difficul-
‘ties.’ I was curious to see if this writing,
so much extolled, was much better than
my own: and the licentiate, who had a
specimen in his pocket, showed me a page
that I admired very much; for it looked
like a writing-master’s copy. While I con-
sidered this beautiful performance, a thought
coming into my head, I desired Garcias to
leave

leave the paper, telling him that I might possibly make some use of it that would turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that time, but would next day tell him more of the matter. The licentiate, to whom, in all probability, the steward had made an eulogium of my genius, withdrew, as much satisfied as if he had been already reinstated in his office. I was truly desirous that he might be so; and that same day laboured for him in the following manner. Being alone with the archbishop, I showed him the writing of Garcias, with which my patron seemed quite charmed: then laying hold of the opportunity — ‘Sir,’ said I to him, ‘since you won’t cause your homilies to be printed, I wish they were at least written in this hand.’ — ‘I am satisfied with thine,’ answered the prelate; ‘but I own, I should not be sorry to have a copy of my works in that hand.’ — ‘Your grace,’ I replied, ‘has nothing to do but to speak: the man who paints so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be ravished to do that service for you; the more, because by these means he may interest your goodness, in extricating him from the melancholy situation in which he has the misfortune to be at present.’

The prelate did not fail to ask the name of the licentiate; upon which I said — ‘He is called Lewis Garcias, and is in despair

‘on account of having incurred your displeasure.’—‘That Garcias,’ said he, interrupting me, ‘was, if I am not mistaken, chaplain to a convent of nuns, and lies under the censure of the church: I remember some informations that I received against him; his morals are but indifferent.’—‘Sir,’ said I, interrupting him in my turn, ‘I will not undertake to justify him; but I know he has enemies; and pretends, that the authors of those informations which you have seen, were more bent upon doing him ill offices, than on telling the truth.’—‘That may be,’ replied the archbishop; ‘there are abundance of very dangerous dispositions in this world. Besides, granting that his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented of his misbehaviour; and, in short, there is mercy for every transgression. Bring the licentiate hither; I take off his suspension.’

Thus it is, that the most severe men abate of their severity, when more dear self-interest is concerned. The archbishop granted, without difficulty, to the vain pleasure of having his works well writ, that which he had refused to the most powerful solicitations. I carried the news immediately to the steward, who imparted them to his friend Garcias, who, the very next day, coming to make an acknowledgment of thanks suitable to the favour obtained, I

presented him to my master, who contented himself with reprimanding him slightly, and gave him the homilies to transcribe. Garcias acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry, and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighbourhood of Granada.

CHAP. IV.

The Archbishop is seized with a Fit of the Apoplexy. The Dilemma in which Gil Blas found himself, and the Method he took to be extricated.

WHILE I thus bestowed my services on different people, Don Fernando being about to leave Granada, I visited that nobleman before his departure, in order to thank him anew for the excellent post which he had procured for me. I appeared to him so well satisfied with my condition, that he said—‘My dear Gil Blas, I am ravished to find thee so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop.’ — ‘I am charmed with him,’ I replied; and shall never be able to show myself grateful enough for his generosity to me. Nothing less could have consoled me for the loss of Don Caesar and his son.’ — ‘I am persuaded,’ answered he, ‘that they are both extremely mortified at your absence; but, perhaps, you are not separated for ever: Fortune may one day

‘bring you together again. ’Melted by these words, I sighed; and found at that instant my love for Don Alphonso so great, that I would have willingly abandoned the archbishop, with all the agreeable hopes he had given me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that banished me from it had been removed. Don Fernando perceived the emotions of my soul, which pleased him so much, that he embraced me with affection, and assured me that his whole family would always bear a part in my destiny.

Two months after this gentleman’s departure, in the very zenith of my favour, we had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace: the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succoured immediately, and such salutary medicines administered, that in a few days his health was re-established: but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse which he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible, as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag; and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This, indeed, was quite decisive. Sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high, or sunk too low: it was a vague discourse, the rhe-

toric of an old professor, a mere capucinade. *)

I was not the only person who took notice of this: the greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another — ‘This sermon smells strongly of ‘the apoplexy.’ — ‘Come, Master Homily-critic,’ said I then to myself, ‘prepare to do ‘your office! you see that his grace begins ‘to fail; it is your duty to give him notice ‘of it; not only as the depository of his ‘thoughts, but likewise, lest some one of ‘his friends should be free enough with him ‘to prevent you: in that case, you know ‘what would happen; your name would be ‘erased from his last will, in which there is, ‘doubtless, a better legacy provided for you ‘than the library of the Licentiate Sedillo.’

After these reflections, I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point: I imagined that it might be ill received by an author like him, conceited of his own works; but, rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself, that he could not possibly take it amiss, after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. And to this, that I depended upon my being able to

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*) Capucinade; a sarcasm on the sermons of the Capucins, not remarkable for correctness.

mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now was, how to break the ice. Luckily, the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered, that his homilies were always admired; but, in my opinion, the last had not succeeded so well as the rest, in affecting the audience. ‘How, friend!’ replied he, with astonishment; ‘has it met with any Aristarchus?’ *) — ‘No, Sir,’ said I; ‘by no means: such works as yours are not to be criticised; every body is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?’

My master grew pale at these words; and said, with a good forced smile — ‘So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste!’ — ‘I don’t say so, Sir, cried I, quite disconcerted: ‘I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works.’

*) Aristarchus, was a great critic.

—‘I understand you,’ he replied; ‘you think I flag, don’t you? Come, be plain: you believe it is time for me to think of retiring.’—‘I should not have been so bold,’ said I, ‘as to speak so freely, if your grace had not commanded me: I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom.’—‘God forbid!’ cried he, with precipitation; ‘God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing, I should be very unjust. I don’t at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding.’

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again; but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised! ‘Say no more, my child,’ said he; ‘you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know, that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove; for my genius (thank Heaven!) has, as yet, lost nothing of its vigour. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go,’ added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet; ‘go, tell my treasurer to give you an hundred du-

‘cats, and may Heaven conduct you with
‘that sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; I wish you
‘all manner of prosperity, with a little more
‘taste!’

CHAP. V.

*The Step that Gil Blas took after the
Archbishop had dismissed him. His
accidental Meeting with the Licenti-
ate, who had been so much obliged to
him; with the Gratitude of that Priest.*

I went out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness, of the archbishop, and more enraged against him, than afflicted at the loss of his favour. I even doubted some time, if I should go and touch my hundred ducats; but, after mature deliberation, I was not fool enough to refuse them. I considered, that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate; in which I was resolved not to be wanting, as often as his homilies should be brought upon the carpet in my presence.

I went, therefore, and demanded the hundred ducats of the treasurer, without mentioning a single word of what had happened between his master and me; and went afterwards in quest of Melchior de la Ronda, to bid him an eternal adieu. He loved me too much to be insensible of my misfortune, which, while I recounted, I

perceived that grief was painted in his countenance. In spite of all the respect he owed the archbishop, he could not help blaming his behaviour. But as I swore, in my rage, that the prelate should pay for it, and that I would make the whole town merry at his expense, the sage Melchior said to me—
‘Believe me, my dear Gil Blas, you had
‘better suppress your resentment. People
‘of an inferior rank ought always to respect
‘persons of quality, whatever cause they
‘may have given them to complain. There
‘are, I own, some very mean noblemen,
‘who scarce deserve the least consideration;
‘but, as they have the power of doing mischief, they are to be feared.’

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, which I promised to observe. ‘If you go,’ said he, ‘to Madrid, you shall visit Joseph Navarro, my nephew, who is clerk of the kitchen to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and (I dare say) a young man worthy of your friendship; frank, brisk, obliging, and forward to serve his friends: I wish he and you may become acquainted.’ I answered, that I would not fail to wait on this Joseph Navarro, on my first arrival at Madrid, whither I was determined to go. I then quitted the archbishop’s palace, with an intent never to set foot in it again. If I

had still been in possession of my horse, I should have, perhaps, set out immediately for Toledo; but I had sold him while I was in favour, believing that I should have no farther occasion for his service. I hired a furnished room, resolved to stay a month at Granada, and then repair to the Count de Polan.

As dinner-time approached, I asked of my landlady, if there was not an eating-house in the neighbourhood; and she answered, that there was an excellent one a few steps from her house, where there was very good accommodation, and a great deal of good company. I made her show me the place; and going thither a little after, was directed into a large hall, which bore some resemblance to a refectory. Ten or twelve people sat at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with one another, while every one eat his own little portion. My mels was likewise brought, which, at another time, would doubtless have made me regret the table I had lost; but I was then so much piqued against the archbishop, that the scanty allowance of my eating-house, seemed preferable to the good cheer I had enjoyed in his palace. I condemned a variety of dishes, and arguing like the doctor of Valladolid — ‘Unhappy are those,’ said I to myself, ‘who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must continu-

ally be on his guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading his stomach! Can one eat too little?' In my ill-humour, I praised those very aphorisms I had hitherto very much neglected.

While I dispatched my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the Licentiate Lewis Garcias, now become vicar of Gabia in the manner already related, come into the hall. He no sooner perceived me, than he came running to salute me with the utmost eagerness, or rather with all the expressions of excessive joy. He hugged me close, and I was obliged to undergo a very long compliment on the service I had done him. He fatigued me with his demonstrations of gratitude. 'Fore gad, my dear patron! since I have had the good fortune to meet you here, we shan't part without a glass; but as there is no good wine in this eating-house, I will carry you, if you please, after our scanty repast, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of fine dry Lucena, and a glass of fine Muscadine of Foncarrel. We must certainly commit that debauch. I wish I had the happiness of enjoying you a few days only at my parsonage of Gabia. There you should be received like a generous Maecenas, to whom I owe the quiet and easy life I lead.'

While he talked to me in this manner, his allowance was served, and he went to

work; not without ceasing, however, to entertain me, at intervals, with something which he thought would flatter my vanity. I had laid hold of this opportunity to speak in my turn; and, as he did not forget to enquire about his friend the steward, I made no mystery of my leaving the archbishop's service. I even related to him the most minute circumstances of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After what he had said to me, who would not have expected to hear him penetrated with the most grateful sorrow, exclaim against the archbishop? But this was the farthest thing from his thoughts. He grew indifferent, and pensive; finished his dinner without speaking a word; then rising suddenly from table, bid me good b'w'ye, in a cool manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful wretch, seeing me no longer in a condition to serve him, spared himself even the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I laughed at his ingratitude, and looking at him with all the contempt he deserved, called to him aloud, that I might be heard — 'Holloa! you sage chaplain of nuns, go and give orders to cool that delicious wine of Lucena, with which you have promised to regale me.'

CHAP. VI.

*Gil Blas goes to see a Play at Granada.
His Astonishment at the Sight of one of
the Actresses; and the Consequences of
that Event.*

GARCIAS was no sooner out of the hall, than two well dressed cavaliers came in and sat down by me: they began to talk of the players of the Granada company, and of a new comedy which was then on the stage. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the city; and, I resolved to go to see it that very day; for I had not been at a play since my arrival at Granada. As I had almost all that time lived in the archbishop's palace, where that diversion was anathematized, I had taken care not to indulge that pleasure, but amuse myself entirely with my master's homilies.

I repaired, therefore, at the proper time, to the playhouse, where I found a numerous assembly; overheard, all round me, dissertations on the piece, before it began; and observed, that every body undertook to criticise it. One person declared himself for, another against the performance. 'Was there ever a work better composed?' said one on my right. 'What a pitiful style!' cried one on my left. Truly, if there are a good many bad authors, it must be allowed

there are still a greater number of wretched critics; and, when I consider the mortifications that dramatic poets must undergo, I am astonished that there are any so bold as to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of writers, who sometimes corrupt the judgment of the public.

At length, the Gracioso *) presented himself to open the scene. He was saluted, on his first appearance, with a general clap; by which I perceived, that he was one of those spoiled actors, in whom the pit pardons every thing. And, indeed, this player did not speak one word, nor perform one gesture, without attracting applause. The audience made him too sensible of the pleasure they had in seeing him on the stage; and he abused their favour accordingly. I perceived, that he sometimes forgot himself in the middle of a scene, and put their prepossessions in his behalf to too severe a proof; for they would often have done him justice, had they hissed instead of extolling him to the skies.

There was likewise a clapping of hands at the appearance of some other actors; and, in particular, of an actress, who performed the part of a waiting-woman, whom, having considered with attention, no terms can express my surprise, when I recollected

*) A favourite actor.

in her the person of Laura, my dear Laura! whom I still believed to be in the service of Arsenia, ad Madrid. I could not doubt, that it was she; her shape, her features, the sound of her voice, every thing assured me that I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, as if I had mistrusted the evidence of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier who sat by me. 'Hey!' said he, 'from whence came you? It seems you are just arrived, since you don't know the fair Estella!'

The resemblance was too perfect for me to be deceived by this disguise; I could easily conceive, that Laura, when she changed her condition, had also altered her name; and curious to know her situation, for the public is generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons in her sphere, I begged to know of the same man, if this Estella had not some gallant of importance. He answered, that a Portuguese nobleman, called the Marquis de Marialva, who had been about two months at Granada, was at a considerable expence on her account. He might have told me a great deal more, if I had not been afraid of fatiguing him with questions. I was more engrossed by the news which this cavalier had told me, than by the representation of the play; and, if any body had asked the subject of the piece, when I came out, he would have embar-

raised me not a little: I did nothing but muse upon Laura (or Estella), and firmly resolved to go and visit her next day; though I was not without anxiety about the reception I should meet with. I had reason to believe, that the sight of me would not yield her much pleasure in this brilliant situation of her affairs; nay, I imagined that such a good actress, in order to revenge herself upon one with whom she had certainly cause to be dissatisfied, would probably disclaim his acquaintance. All this did not dissuade me from my design of going. After a slight repast (for such only my eating-house afforded) I went home to my lodging, where I waited impatiently for the next day.

I slept little that night, and got up before the sun; but as I concluded, that a nobleman's mistress would not be visible so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming; resolving to present myself before her in such a condition, as would give her no cause to blush at seeing me again. I sallied out about ten o'clock, and repaired to her lodging, to which I received a direction at the house where the players lived. She possessed the chief apartment of a large house; the door of which being opened to me by a chambermaid, I told her that I wanted to speak with Dame Estella. The maid went in to signify my desire, and I immediately
heard

heard her mistress pronounce, with a loud voice — ‘Who is the young man? what does he want? Let him come in.’ By this I concluded, that I had chosen an unseasonable time for my visit; that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet; and that her reason for speaking so loud, was to persuade him that she never received suspected messages. My conjecture was true; the Marquis de Marialva commonly passed the morning in her company; and I expected a very disagreeable compliment, when this truly original actress, seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying — ‘Ah! my dear brother, is it you?’ and with these words, embraced me several times. Then turning to her gallant — ‘My lord,’ said she, ‘pardon me for yielding to the force of blood in your presence. After an absence of three years, I cannot behold a brother, whom I tenderly love, without giving him some marks of my affection. — Well, my dear Gil Blas,’ continued she, addressing me anew, ‘tell me some news of my family: in what condition did you leave it?’

This question embarrassed me at first; but I soon discovered Laura’s intention, and seconding her artifice, answered with an air suited to the scene we had to act — ‘Thank Heaven, sister, our parents are in good health.’ — ‘I don’t doubt,’ she replied, ‘that you are astonished to find me an actress at

Granada; but do not condemn me unheard. Three years ago, as you remember, my father thought he had settled me to advantage, by giving me in marriage to Captain Don Antonio Coelo, who carried me from the Asturias to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after our arrival in that city, having had an affair of honour brought upon him by his own violent humour, he killed a cavalier who had taken it in his head to favour me with some attention. This gentleman being related to persons of great quality and credit, my husband, who had no interest, fled into Catalonia, with all the money and jewels he could find in the house; embarked at Barcelona, crossed into Italy, engaged in the service of the Venetians, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. In the mean time, our landed estate was confiscated, and I had but a very small jointure left. What could I do in such a troublesome extremity? I could not return into the Asturias: for what purpose go thither? all the consolation I should have received from my family, would have been no more than sympathy and condolence. On the other hand, I had been too well educated to be capable of embracing a life of libertinism. Upon what determination then could I fix? I have turned actress to preserve my character.'

The Marquis de Marialva, who lost not a word of the whole discourse, implicitly believed every syllable of what Don Antonio's widow was pleased to utter. He even joined in the conversation, and asked if I was in any business at Granada, or elsewhere. I was in some doubt, at that instant, whether or no I should tell a lie; but thinking that unnecessary, I spoke truth, recounting every circumstance of my entering into, and quitting the archbishop's service; which afforded infinite diversion to the Portuguese nobleman. It is true that, notwithstanding my promise to Melchior, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his grace. But the most diverting part of the scene was, that Laura, who thought I had invented a story in imitation of her, burst out into loud fits of laughter, which she would have probably spared, had she known that I did not dissemble.

Having ended my narration, which I finished with the lodging I had hired, word was brought that dinner was on the table. Upon which I would have retired, in order to go and dine at my eating-house; but Laura, stopping me, said — 'What do you mean, brother! you shall dine with me: and I won't even suffer you to live any longer in a hired room; for I intend you shall both eat and lodge in my house. Order your baggage to be brought hither this evening; I have a bed to spare.'

The Portuguese nobleman, who perhaps was not very well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, said — ‘No, Estella; you have not convenience for him in these lodgings. Your brother seems to be a pretty young fellow; and the advantage he has in being so near to you, interests me in his favour. I will take him into my service; he shall be my favourite secretary, and chief confident. Let him not fail to come and sleep at my house this night; for I will order an apartment to be prepared for the purpose. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats; and if, in the sequel, I have cause, as I hope I shall, to be satisfied with his behaviour, I will put him in a condition to console himself for being too sincere with the archbishop.’

The acknowledgments which I made to the marquis at this juncture were followed by those of Laura, who improved upon mine. So saying, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went away. She led me immediately into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me — ‘I should burst,’ cried she, ‘if I was obliged to resist any longer the inclination I have to laugh.’ Then throwing herself into an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed immoderately, as if she had lost her senses. I found it impossible not to follow her example; and when we had indulged ourselves sufficiently, ‘Con-

‘fess, Gil Blas,’ said he, ‘that we have acted
‘a pleasant farce: but I did not expect such
‘a catastrophe: my design being no other
‘than to provide for you a table and lodging
‘in my house; which that I might offer with
‘decency, I made thee pass for my brother.
‘I am ravished that such a good post has oc-
‘curred to thee by accident. The Marquis
‘de Marialva is a generous nobleman,
‘who will even exceed his promise in thy
‘favour. Another,’ added she, ‘might not,
‘perhaps, have given such a gracious re-
‘ception to one who quits his friends with-
‘out bidding them farewell: but I am one
‘of those good creatures, who cannot help
‘seeing again, with pleasure, a rogue whom
‘they have once loved.’ I candidly ac-
‘knowledged my impolite behaviour, for
which I asked pardon. She then conducted
me into a very handsome dining-room,
where we sat down at table; and, as a
waiting-woman and lackey were present,
behaved to one another like brother and
sister.

Having dined, we went back to the
same closet where we had conversed together
before. There my incomparable Laura,
giving a loose to all her natural gaiety, de-
manded an account of all my adventures
since our separation. I made a faithful re-
cital of the whole, and when I had gratified
her curiosity, she gave me the same satis-

faction, in recounting the following history of herself.

CHAP. VII.

The History of Laura.

I am going to relate, as succinctly as I can, by what accident I embraced the profession of a player. Great events happened, after you left me in such an honourable manner. My mistress Arsenia, rather tired than disgusted with the world, renounced the stage, and carried me with her to a fine estate which she had bought near Zimora, with the price of her favours. In this city we soon contracted an acquaintance; and going thither frequently, to pass a day or two, came back again, and shut ourselves up in our castle.

In one of these small journies, Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by accident, and happening to be pleased with my appearance, sought an opportunity of speaking with me in private; which, that I may conceal nothing from thee, I own, was facilitated by myself. He was a cavalier not yet twenty years old, fair as Love himself, a perfect model in shape, and still more engaging by his gallant and generous behaviour than by his

‘person; for he made me an offer of a large
‘brilliant, which he had on his finger, with
‘such a good grace, and pressing entreaties,
‘that I could not, for my soul, refuse it. I
‘did not possess such an amiable gallant
‘with indifference. But what madness it
‘is in Abigails to attach themselves to the
‘young heirs of persons in authority! his
‘father, the most severe of all corregidors,
‘informed of our correspondence, made
‘haste to prevent the consequences of it, and
‘ordered me to be apprehended by a troop
‘of alguazils, who carried me, regardless of
‘my cries, to the Hospital of Compassion.*)
‘There, without any other form of process,
‘the superior ordered me to be stripped of
‘my ring and dress, and clothed with a long
‘gown of grey serge, girded about me with
‘a strap of black leather, from whence a ro-
‘lary of large beads hung down to my heels.
‘This being performed, I was conducted
‘into a hall, where I found an old monk,
‘of an order that I did not know, who fell a
‘preaching penitence to me, much in the
‘same manner as Dame Leonarda exhorted
‘thee to patience in the cavern. He told me
‘that I was very much obliged to those who
‘caused me to be shut up in that place, for
‘they had done me infinite service in rescuing
‘me from the snares of the devil. I will
‘frankly own my ingratitude: far from

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*) The house of correction.

‘thinking myself beholden to those who had
‘done me that good office, I loaded them
‘with imprecations.

‘Eight days I passed in afflicting myself:
‘but on the ninth (for I counted the very
‘minutes) my fate seemed to bear another
‘aspect. Crossing a small court, I met the
‘steward of our house, a person who ruled
‘with unlimited sway; the superior herself
‘was under his command; and he rendered
‘an account of his stewardship to none but
‘the corregidor, on whom alone he depended,
‘and whose entire confidence he enjoyed.
‘His name was Pedro Zendono; he was born
‘in the town of Selleldon in Biscay, being a
‘tall, pale, meager man, whose figure would
‘have served as an excellent pattern for the
‘picture of a rank rogue. He scarce seemed
‘to look at the sisters; and, in short, thou
‘never sawest such an hypocritical face,
‘although thou hast lived in an archbishop’s
‘palace.

‘Well, then,’ said she, ‘I met this Signior
‘Zendono, who stopped me, saying —
‘“Daughter, be comforted, I am touched
‘“with your misfortune.” ‘He said no more,
‘but went about his business, leaving me
‘to make what commentaries I pleased on
‘such a laconic text. As I believed him to
‘be a good man, I innocently concluded,
‘that he had taken the trouble of examining

‘into the cause of my confinement, and
‘finding me not guilty enough to deserve
‘such unworthy treatment, was resolved to
‘do me a good office with the corregidor.
‘I was little acquainted with the Biscayan,
‘who had quite other intentions. He then
‘resolved in his mind the scheme of a jour-
‘ney, which he imparted to me a few days
‘after. “My dear Laura,” said he, “I am
‘so much affected with your sufferings, that
‘I am resolved to put an end to them im-
‘mediately. In so doing, I know I shall
‘embrace my own ruin; but I am no longer
‘master of myself. I intend to take you out
‘of prison to-morrow, and conduct you in
‘person to Madrid: being resolved to sa-
‘crifice every thing to the pleasure of being
‘your deliverer.”

‘I was ready to swoon with joy at these
‘words of Zendono, who, judging, by my
‘acknowledgments, that I longed for nothing
‘so much as liberty, had the impudence to
‘carry me off next day, in sight of every
‘body, by the following stratagem. He told
‘the superior, that he had orders to bring me
‘to the corregidor, who was at a pleasure-
‘house, two leagues from town; and, with
‘the utmost assurance, made me get into a
‘post-chaise with him, drawn by two good
‘mules, which he had bought for that pur-
‘pose; attended by no other servants than a
‘valet, who conducted the chaise, and was

‘entirely devoted to the steward; we set out,
 ‘not for Madrid, as I imagined, but towards
 ‘the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived
 ‘before the Corregidor of Zamora could get
 ‘notice of our flight, and send the beagles
 ‘of justice in pursuit of us.

‘Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayan
 ‘made me put on a suit of men’s clothes,
 ‘which he had the precaution to provide;
 ‘and now looking upon me as fairly em-
 ‘barked with him, said to me, at the inn
 ‘where we lodged — “Fair Laura, be not
 ‘offended with me for bringing you into
 ‘Portugal; for the Corregidor of Zamora
 ‘will make search for us in our native coun-
 ‘try, as two criminals to whom Spain
 ‘ought not to afford a retreat. But,” added
 he, “we can shelter ourselves from his re-
 ‘sentment in this foreign kingdom, although
 ‘it be, at present, under the dominion of
 ‘the Spanish monarchy. Here we shall, at
 ‘least, be more secure than in our own
 ‘country. Follow, therefore, a man who
 ‘adores you; and let us settle at Coimbra,
 ‘where I will become a spy for the Holy
 ‘Office, and, under the shade of that for-
 ‘midable tribunal, our days will smoothly
 ‘glide in ease and pleasure.”

‘Such a forward proposal gave me to un-
 ‘derstand that I had to do with a cavalier
 ‘who did not chuse to redress the grievances

‘of damsels, merely for the glory of knight-
‘errantry. I perceived that he depended a
‘good deal upon my gratitude, and still
‘more upon my distress. Nevertheless,
‘though these two considerations spoke to
‘me in his behalf, I rejected his proposal
‘with disdain. ‘Tis true, indeed, I had
‘two strong reasons for showing myself so
‘reserved: I disliked his person, and
‘mistrusted his circumstances. But when,
‘returning to the charge, he offered to wed
‘me, as a preliminary, and showed me that
‘his stewardship had put him in a condition
‘to enjoy himself for a long time, I won’t
‘deny that I began to listen to his addresses.
‘I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which
‘he spread before me; and found, by ex-
‘perience, that as many metamorphoses are
‘made by interest as by love. My Biscayan
‘became, gradually, quite another man in
‘my eyes; his tall withered carcase assumed
‘the form of a fine shape; his pale com-
‘plexion seemed agreeably fair; and I gave
‘a favourable appellation to his hypocriti-
‘cal look. I then accepted his hand, with-
‘out reluctance, in the face of Heaven, which
‘he called to witness our engagement. After
‘this he suffered no contradiction on my
‘part; we set out again on our travels: and
‘in a short time, Coimbra beheld a new fa-
‘mily within its walls.

‘My husband purchased for me some
‘handsome clothes, adapted to my own sex,

‘and presented me with several diamonds,
‘among which I recollected that of Don Fe-
‘lix Maldonada. This discovery was suffi-
‘cient to make me conceive how all the
‘jewels I had seen were acquired, and to
‘persuade me that I had not married a scru-
‘pulous observer of the seventh article of
‘the decalogue. But, considering myself
‘as the first cause of his dexterity, I forgave
‘him in my heart: for a woman will excuse
‘even the bad actions which her beauty
‘prompts the men to commit; otherwise, I
‘should have thought him an execrable
‘villain.

‘I was pretty well satisfied with him for
‘two or three months, during which he be-
‘haved in a gallant manner, and seemed to
‘love me with great tenderness: never-
‘theless these marks of affection were false
‘appearances; for the rogue cheated me at
‘last. One morning, on my return from
‘mass, I found nothing at home but bare
‘walls; the whole furniture, with all my
‘baggage, was carried off: Zondono, and
‘his faithful valet, had taken their measures
‘so well, that, in less than an hour, the ge-
‘neral pillage of the house had been begun
‘and finished, in such a manner, that with
‘the clothes only which I had on my back,
‘and the ring of Don Felix, which was
‘luckily on my finger, I saw myself abandon-
‘ed by an ungrateful wretch, like another

‘Ariadne. But I assure thee, I did not
‘amuse myself with making elegies on my
‘misfortunes; I rather thanked Heaven for
‘having delivered me from such a wretch,
‘who could not fail, soon or late, to fall into
‘the hands of justice; and looked upon
‘the days we had spent together as so much
‘lost time, for which I would make amends,
‘Had I been desirous of staying in Portugal,
‘and attaching myself to some lady of fashion,
‘I should not have wanted a place: but,
‘whether I loved my own country, or was
‘influenced by the force of destiny, which
‘prepared a better fortune for me here, I
‘resolved to return to Spain; and applying
‘to a jeweller, who gave me ready money
‘for my ring, set out with an old Spanish
‘lady, who was going in a chaise to Seville.

‘This person, whose name was Doro-
‘thea, had been to visit one of her relations
‘settled at Coimbra, and was on her return
‘to Seville, where she lived. There was
‘such a sympathy between her disposition
‘and mine, that we became friends the very
‘first day of our journey; and our mutual
‘affection grew so strong on the road, that,
‘on our arrival, the lady would suffer me to
‘lodge no where but in her house. I had
‘no cause to repent of my acquaintance, for
‘I never knew a woman of a better charac-
‘ter; and one might still perceive, by her
‘features, and the sparkling of her eyes, that

“in her youth many a guitar had been
“thrummed on her account: indeed, she
“was the widow of several noble husbands,
“and lived in an honourable manner on the
“jointures which she enjoyed.

“Among other excellent qualities she had
“that of being very compassionate to unfor-
“tunate young women. When I imparted
“to her my own story, she entered warmly
“into my interests, and bestowed a thousand
“curses on Zendonno. “What dogs these men
“are!” said she, in a tone that made me
“guess she had met with some steward in her
way; “perfidious wretches! I know there
“are such villains in the world, who divert
“themselves in deceiving women. What I
“am pleased at, my dear child,” added she,
“is, that, according to your relation, you
“are no longer bound to that perjured
“Biscayan: if your marriage with him was
“good enough to secure your reputation; by
“way of recompense, it is also bad enough
“to permit you to contract a better, when-
“ever you can find an opportunity.”

“I went abroad every day with Dorothea,
“either to church, or to visit; and this being
“the way to meet with some adventure soon,
“I attracted the notice of several cavaliers;
“who, in order to sound the business, made
“interest with my old landlady: but some
“had not wherewithal to make a good

‘settlement, and others were still minors;
‘so that I had not the least desire of listening
‘to any of them. One day, Dorothea and
‘I took a whim of going to see a play at Se-
‘ville; *) and, upon consulting the bill, we
‘found that the players intended to act *La*
‘*formosa comedia, el Embaxador de Si-*
‘*mismo*, composed by Lope de Vega Carpio.

‘Among the actresses who appeared on
‘the stage, I discovered my old friend Phe-
‘nicia, that jolly merry wench whom thou
‘hast seen when she was waiting-maid to
‘Florimonda, and with whom thou hast
‘sometimes supped at Arsenia’s house. I
‘knew that she had not been in Madrid for
‘two years before, but was ignorant of her
‘being an actress. Having an eager desire
‘of embracing her, I found the piece very

a) Seville, the capital of Andalusia, in Spain, is situated in a fertile country on the river Guadalquivir, over which it has a stout bridge of seventeen boats, which joins the city to a large suburb on the other side. The compass of the city, including this suburb, is supposed to be near fourteen miles, but the wall is only eight. It is very strong, and adorned with fifteen gates, and an hundred and sixty six towers. The number of inhabitants is reckoned to amount to three hundred thousand. It has also an university, and a great number of students. Among the manufactures carried on in this city, those of the silk and silver stuffs are the most considerable. Seville is an archbishopric of great antiquity and dignity. Its revenue amounts to an hundred and twenty thousand ducats per annum.

‘tedious: but this might be the fault of the
‘actors, who played either too ill or too well
‘to yield me amusement; for as to me, who
‘am a merry creature, I own myself as much
‘diverted by a player who is perfectly ridi-
‘culous, as by one who is excellent in his
‘way.

‘At length the moment I waited for
‘being arrived, that is the end of *La for-*
‘*mosa comedia*; my widow and I went be-
‘hind the scenes, where we perceived Phe-
‘nicia acting the coquette, and listening with
‘affectation to the soft warbling of a young
‘bird, which, it seems, had allowed itself
‘to be ensnared by her declamation. She
‘no sooner observed me, than quitting her
‘admirer with a courteous air, she came
‘towards me with open arms, and loaded
‘me with caresses. We expressed our mu-
‘tual joy in seeing one another again; but
‘the time and place not permitting us to
‘launch out into a long conversation, we
‘deferred it till next day, when we might
‘discourse together more fully at her
‘lodgings.

‘The itch of talking is one of the most
‘eager passions of women: I could not close
‘an eye the whole night, so much did I long
‘to engage Phenicia, and worry her with
‘questions upon questions. God knows, I
‘was not lazy in getting up, to repair to her
lodging,

‘lodging, according to the direction she had
‘given me! She lived with the whole com-
‘pany in a large hired house; which, when
‘I entered, I met a maid-servant, who, when
‘I desired her to conduct me to Phenicia’s
‘apartment, showed me up to a gallery, on
‘one side of which were ten or twelve small
‘chambers, divided from one another by
‘partitions of deal boards only, and possessed
‘by the joyous band. My guide knocked
‘at a door, which Phenicia, whose tongue
‘itched as well as mine, came and opened.
‘Scarce did we allow ourselves times to sit,
‘before we began to chatter. We had a severe
‘brush, and uttered in our turns, so many
‘interrogations, that the questions and re-
‘plies succeeded one another with amazing
‘volubility.

‘After having recounted our mutual ad-
‘ventures, and reciprocally informed our-
‘selves of the state of our affairs, Phenicia
‘asked what I intended to do: I answered,
‘that I was resolved, until something better
‘should cast up, to enter into the service of
‘some young lady of quality. “O fie!” cried
my friend, “you joke, sure! Is it possible,
‘my dear, that thou art not yet disgusted
‘with servitude? Art thou not tired with
‘seeing thyself subjected to another’s will;
‘with humouring the caprices of a mistress;
‘with hearing thyself reproached; and, in a
‘word, with being a slave! Why wilt thou

“not, by my example, embrace a theatrical
“life? Nothing can be more convenient for
“people of spirit, who have neither birth nor
“fortune; it is a situation that holds the
“middle place between the nobility and ci-
“tizens; an unrestricted condition, free of
“that decorum which is so troublesome to
“society. Our revenues are paid in ready
“cash by the public, which is our bank; we
“live in continual mirth, and spend our
“money as we get it.

“The stage,” added she, “is particularly
“favourable to women: while I lived with
“Florimonda, (I blush at the remembrance
“of it!) I was reduced to the necessity of
“listening to the candle-snuffers of the prin-
“ce’s company; not one man of fashion paid
“the least attention to my figure. What
“was the cause of this unimportance: I was
“not seen: the finest picture has not its ef-
“fect, except in a particular light; but, since
“I have been placed upon my proper pe-
“destal, (that is, on the stage) Heavens,
“what a change has happened! I see at my
“heels the gayest youths of all those towns
“through which we pass. An actress, there-
“fore, enjoys a great deal of pleasure in
“her occupation: if she is prudent, I mean,
“if she favours one gallant only at a time,
“she has all the honour imaginable paid to
“her; her chastity is applauded, and when
“she changes her lover, she is looked upon

“as a real widow who marries a second
“husband : nay, if a widow takes a third,
“she is spoken of with contempt, and said
“to have infringed the delicacy of her sex;
“whereas the actress seems to be more and
“more regarded, in proportion to the in-
“crease of her admirers. After she has gone
“through an hundred intrigues, she is still
“a morsel for a lord.”

“To whom do you talk in this manner?”
said I, interrupting her. “Do you think I
“am ignorant of these advantages? I have
“often reflected on them; and they but too
“much flatter the imagination of such a girl
“as me: I even feel an inclination for the
“stage; but that alone is not sufficient;
“talent is absolutely necessary, and I have
“none; for when I sometimes attempted to
“repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she
“always found fault with my performance,
“so that I was disgusted at the profession.”
— “Thou art easily discouraged,” replied
Phenicia; “dost thou not know that these
“great actresses are commonly jealous?
“They are afraid, in spite of all their vanity,
“of being eclipsed. In short, I won’t take
“Arsenia’s word for thy capacity; for she
“was certainly insincere. Nay, I assure thee,
“without flattery, that thou art born for the
“stage; thou hast genius, a free and grace-
“ful carriage, a sweet voice, a good chest,
“and withal a face! Ah! baggage, how

“many cavaliers wilt thou charm, if thou
“turnest actresses!”

“She plied me with more such seducing
“discourse, and made me pronounce some
“verses, that I myself might judge of my
“capacity for acting: but when she heard
“me, it was quite another case; she over-
“whelmed me with applause, and preferred
“me to all the actresses in Madrid. After
“this I should have been inexcusable had I
“doubted my own merit. Arsenia stood im-
“peached and convicted of envy and insin-
“cerity; and I could not help allowing that
“I was an admirable subject. Two actors,
“who happened to come in at that instant,
“and before whom Phenicia obliged me to
“repeat the verses which I had already recited
“to her, were seized with a kind of extasy;
“from which they no sooner recollected
“themselves, than they loaded me with praise.
“In good earnest, had the three wagered
“with one another which should applaud me
“most, they could not have employed more
“hyperbolical expressions. My modesty was
“not proof against such eulogiums: I began
“to believe myself of some value; and thus
“my thoughts were turned towards the
“stage.

“Come on then, my dear,” said I to
“Phenicia, “the affair is determined; I will
“follow thy advice, and enter into the com-
“pany, provided they think well of it.” “My
“friend, transported with joy at these words,

‘hugged me in her arms; and her two com-
‘rades seemed no less delighted to find me
‘in these sentiments. We agreed that next
‘day I should repair to the theatre in the
‘morning, and, before the whole company
‘assembled, show the same sample of my ta-
‘lent that I had exhibited to them. If I had ac-
‘quired the good opinion of those who were
‘at Phenicia’s lodgings, all the actors judged
‘of me still more favourably when I had
‘pronounced about twenty verses in their
‘presence. They received me very willingly
‘into their company; and then I was wholly
‘engrossed by my first appearance, which
‘that I might render as gay as possible, I
‘employed upon it all the money that re-
‘mained from the sale of my ring; and
‘though I had not enough to make a superb
‘figure, I at least found means to supply the
‘want of magnificence by a genteel taste in
‘my drefs.

‘At length I appeared on the stage for
‘the first time; and then, what thundering
‘applause, what eulogiums was I favoured
‘with! It is downright modesty, my friend,
‘to say simply that I ravished the audience;
‘one must have been witness of the noise I
‘made at Seville to believe it. I became
‘the discourse of the whole city; which,
‘during three weeks, came in crowds to the
‘play-house, in such a manner, that the
‘company, by this novelty, recalled the pub-

‘lic, which had begun to desert them. I
‘began, then, in a manner that charmed
‘every body; and this was the same thing as
‘if I had advertised myself to be let to the
‘highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all
‘ages, outbid one another in their proffers
‘to me; and if I had followed my own in-
‘clination, I would have chosen him who
‘was young and handsome: but people of
‘our stamp ought to consult nothing but
‘their interest and ambition, when a settle-
‘ment is depending. For this reason, Don
‘Ambrosio de Nisana, a man already old and
‘ugly, both rich and generous, and one of
‘the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia,
‘had the preference. True, indeed, I made
‘him purchase my favours at a good price;
‘he hired for me a grand house, which he
‘furnished in a very magnificent manner,
‘gave me an expert cook, two lackies, a
‘chamber-maid, and a thousand ducats for
‘my monthly expence, over and above rich
‘clothes, and a pretty large quantity of
‘jewels.

‘What a change was this in my fortune!
‘My reason could not support it: I appeared
‘to myself, all of a sudden, quite another
‘person; and I am not surprized that there
‘are girls, who forget, in a little time, the
‘meanness and misery from which they are
‘rescued by the caprice of a man of quality.
‘I will make a sincere confession; the ap-

‘plause of the public, the flattering discourse
‘that I heard from all quarters, and the pas-
‘sion of Don Ambrosio, inspired me with
‘sentiments of vanity that amounted to mere
‘extravagance. I considered my talent as a
‘noble title; I assumed the airs of a woman
‘of quality; and becoming as covetous as
‘I had before been prodigal of my smiles, re-
‘solved to limit my prospect to dukes, counts
‘and marquisses only.

‘Signior de Nisana came to sup at my
‘house every evening with some of his
‘friends; and I, on my side, took care to
‘invite the most engaging of our actresses;
‘so that we commonly spent the best part of
‘the night in drinking and making merry.
‘I accommodated myself mighty well to such
‘an agreeable life, which, however, lasted
‘but six months. Noblemen are apt to
‘change, otherwise they would be too ami-
‘able. Don Ambrosio forsook me, for a
‘conquest he had made of a young creature
‘from Granada, who had arrived at Seville
‘with some charms, and the talent of dispo-
‘sing them to the best advantage. My af-
‘fliction at his inconstancy did not last,
‘however, longer than four and twenty
‘hours. I chose in his room a cavalier of
‘two and twenty, called Don Lewis de
‘Alcacer; to whom, in point of person, few
‘Spaniards could be compared. Thou wilt,
‘doubtless, ask, and thou hast reason to do,

‘why I took such a young nobleman for my
‘gallant, when I knew the consequences of
‘such a choice. But, besides that Don Lew-
‘is, had neither father nor mother, and
‘already enjoyed his estate, I must tell thee,
‘that these consequences are not to be dreaded
‘but by girls of a servile condition, or un-
‘happy she-adventurers. Women of our
‘profession are privileged persons, and not
‘at all answerable for the effects that our
‘charms produce. So much the worse for
‘those families whose heirs we pillage!

‘Alcacer and I attached ourselves so
‘strongly to one another, that no mutual
‘passion, I believe, ever equalled that with
‘which we were inflamed. We loved with
‘so much fury, that one would have thought
‘we were both enchanted: and those who
‘were acquainted with our correspondence,
‘believed us the most happy lovers in the
‘world; though we were in reality, the
‘most miserable. If Don Lewis had a per-
‘son altogether amiable, he was at the same
‘time so jealous, that he afflicted me inces-
‘santly with unjust suspicions. It was in
‘vain for me to accommodate myself to this
‘weakness, to constrain myself so far as not
‘to look upon a man. His distrust, ingenious
‘in finding out crimes to lay to my charge,
‘rendered my caution altogether useless.
‘Our most tender moments were always
‘disturbed by quarrels, which it was im-

possible to endure. Both of us lost our patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Wouldst thou believe it? we looked upon the last day as the most charming of our commerce. Equally fatigued with the troubles we had undergone, we expressed the utmost joy in our mutual adieu. We were like two miserable captives, who, after a rude slavery, at last recover their freedom.

Since that adventure, I am always on my guard against love. I will no more contract attachments that may disturb my repose; it does not become those of our profession to sigh like other people; and we ought not to entertain in private, a passion, the ridicule of which we represent in public.

About this time I afforded some employments to Fame, which reported every where that I was an inimitable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Granada wrote to me, proposing that I should enter into their company; and, to let me know that the proposal was not to be rejected, sent me an account of their daily expence, and the terms of their offer; from which I concluded, that it would be for my interest to comply. I accepted it, therefore, though, at bottom, I was grieved at parting from Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman is capable of loving others of her sex. I left

‘the first busy in melting the plate of a little
‘merchant-goldsmith, who, out of vanity,
‘would have an actress for his mistress. I
‘forgot to tell thee, that, when I devoted
‘myself to the stage, I changed, through
‘whim, my name from Laura into that of
‘Estella, under which appellation I set out
‘for Granada.

‘Here my first appearance was no less
‘lucky than at Seville, and I saw myself at
‘once surrounded by admirers; but being
‘resolved to favour none, except in an ho-
‘nourable way, I behaved to them with so
‘much reserve, that they were blinded by
‘my affected modesty. Nevertheless, that I
‘might not be the dupe of a conduct that
‘would be of no service, and which indeed
‘was not natural to me, I was going to listen
‘to a young judge, of the citizen race, who
‘assumed the nobleman by virtue of his
‘office, a sumptuous table, and rich equi-
‘page, when I saw, for the first time, the
‘Marquis de Marialva. The Portuguese lord,
‘who travels through Spain out of curiosity,
‘stopped on his way at Granada; and
‘coming to the play one night, when I did
‘not act, considered with great attention the
‘actresses who presented themselves, and
‘found one to his liking. He made an ac-
‘quaintance with her the very next day, and
‘was ready to conclude the bargain, when
‘I appeared on the stage. My figure, and

‘the air I gave myself, turned the weather-
‘cock all on a sudden, and my Portuguese
‘attached himself to me only. To confess
‘the truth, as I was not ignorant that my
‘comrade had pleased that nobleman, I
‘spared nothing to deprive her of her con-
‘quest; and I had the good fortune to ac-
‘complish it. I know that she bears me a
‘grudge for my success, but I could not help
‘doing it; and she ought to consider it as
‘a thing so natural to women, that the best
‘friends make no scruple of practising it on
‘one another.

CHAP. VIII.

*The Reception which Gil Blas met with
from the Players of Granada, and his
finding an old Acquaintance behind the
Scenes.*

Laura had no sooner finished her story, than an old actress, who lived in the neighbourhood, came to take her up in her way to the playhouse. This venerable stage-heroine would have been very proper for playing the part of the goddess Cotys. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure; upon which a great many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's widow, that I would rejoin her at the theatre, as soon as I ordered my baggage to be carried to the Marquis de Marialva's house, to which he gave me a direction. I went immediately to my own room; from whence, after having satisfied my landlady, I repaired, with a man who carried my portmanteau, to a large furnished house where my new master lodged. I met at the door his steward, who asked me if I was not Dame Estella's brother; and, upon my answering in the affirmative, said—'Signior Cavalier, you are very welcome: the Marquis de Marialva, whose steward I have the honour to be, has ordered me to give you a handsome reception. There is a chamber prepared for you, to which, if you please, I shall show you the way.' So saying, he carried me to the top of the house, and showed me into a chamber, so small that a very narrow bed, a chest, and two chairs, quite filled it. This was my apartment. 'You won't be very much at large in this place,' said my guide; 'but to make you amends, you shall be lodged in a superb manner at Lisbon.' I locked my portmanteau in my chest, put the key in my pocket, and asked at what hour they supped. I was answered, that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but gave a certain monthly sum to each domestic for his board. I put other questions to him, and

learned, that the people belonging to the marquis were a parcel of happy sluggards. After a short conversation, I left the steward, to go in quest of Laura, agreeably engrossed with the presage I had conceived of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the play-house door, and told that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You might have seen the guards as eager in making a passage for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen of Granada. All the servants and doorkeepers whom I met made me profound bows. But what I wish I could paint to the reader, was my seriocomic reception behind the scenes, where I found the company all dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, poured upon me in shoals. The men overwhelmed me with embraces: and the women, in their turns, applying their painted faces to mine, covered it with white and red. Each desirous of being the first to make their compliment, they spoke altogether; it was impossible for me alone to answer; but my sister came to my assistance, and her indefatigable tongue did not leave me in debt to any one.

The embraces of the actors and actresses did not suffice: for I was also obliged to un-

dergo the civilities of the scene-painter, the music, prompter, candle snuffer, and his deputy; in short, of all the servants of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to behold me. One would have thought that all these people were foundlings, who had never seen a brother before.

Meanwhile the performance began; and some gentlemen, who were behind the scenes, ran to their places: while I, like a child of the house, continued to converse with those of the actors who were not on the stage. Among these, I heard one called Melchior: I was struck with the name; I considered with attention the person who bore it, and imagined I had seen him somewhere. I at length recollected him to be Melchior Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I observed in the first volume of my history, soaked crusts of bread in a spring.

Taking him aside accordingly — ‘I am
‘mistaken,’ said I, ‘if you are not that
‘Signior Melchior with whom I had the ho-
‘nour to breakfast one day at the side of a
‘clear spring between Valladolid and Segovia.
‘I was in company with a journeyman bar-
‘ber; we had some provisions in a knapsack,
‘which, being joined to yours, made up a
‘pretty little repast, which was seasoned
‘with a thousand agreeable sallies.’ Zapata,
having mused some minutes, answered —
‘You mention a circumstance which I recall

‘without difficulty; I was then returning
‘to Zamora, from having made an unsuccess-
‘ful attempt on the stage at Madrid: I
‘remember too, that I was in very bad cir-
‘cumstances’.—‘I remember the same thing,’
said I, ‘by this token, that you wore a jacket
‘lined with play pills. You see I have not
‘forgot it, no more than that you complain-
‘ed at that time of having too chaste a wife.’
— ‘Oh, I have no cause to complain of that
‘at present!’ said Zapata, with precipitation;
‘egad! my gossip is very much reformed in
‘that particular, and therefore my jacket is
‘better lined than formerly.’

I was going to congratulate him on his wife’s reformation, when he was obliged to leave me, in order to appear upon the stage. Curious to know his spouse, I made up to an actor, and desired he would show her to me. This he did, saying — ‘There she is; ‘that is Narcissa, the handsomest of our ladies, your sister excepted.’ I immediately concluded, that this actress must be she in favour of whom the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself, before he had seen Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. When the play was over, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I perceived several cooks preparing a great entertainment. ‘Thou mayest sup here,’ said she, ‘I ‘won’t indeed,’ said I; ‘the marquis, per- ‘haps, will chuse to be alone with you.’ —

‘O, not at all!’ replied she; ‘he is to be here with two of his friends and one of our gentlemen; and it is in thy own option to make a sixth. Thou knowest that, in the houses of actresses, secretaries have the privilege of eating with their masters.’— ‘True,’ said I; ‘but it would be a little too early for me to put myself on the footing of a favourite secretary, I must first enjoy his confidence before I can merit that honourable privilege.’ So saying, I left her; and repaired to my eating-house, which I intended to frequent every day, since my master kept no table at home.

CHAP. IX.

He supped that Evening with an extraordinary Man; an Account of what happened between them.

I observed in the hall a kind of old monk, clothed in coarse grey cloth, who was at supper all alone in a corner. Sitting down, out of curiosity, just opposite to him, I saluted him very civilly, and he showed himself no less polite. My pittance being brought, I began to dispatch it with a good deal of appetite; and while I eat in silence, I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I always found fixed on mine. Fatigued with his stubborn perseverance in looking at

at me, I addressed him in these words —
‘Father, have we ever seen one another
‘before? You observe me as if I was not
‘altogether unknown to you.’

He answered, with great gravity — ‘My
reason for fixing my eyes upon you, is to
‘admire the prodigious variety of adventures
‘which are marked in the features of your
‘face.’ — ‘I see,’ said I, with an air of rail-
lery, ‘that your reverence deals in meto-
‘piscopy.’ — I may boast of possessing that
‘art,’ replied the monk; ‘and of having
‘made presages which have been verified
‘by the event. I am also skilled in chiro-
‘mancy, and will venture to say, that my
‘oracles are infallible, when I have com-
‘pared the inspection of the hand with that
‘of the face.’

Although this old man had all the ap-
pearances of a wise person, I thought him
so foolish that I could not help laughing in
his face. Instead of being offended, he
smiled at my unpoliteness, and continued
speaking in these words, after having cast
his eyes around the hall, to be assured that
nobody listened — ‘I am not surprised to
‘see you so prejudiced against two sciences,
‘which are looked upon as frivolous in this
‘age.’ The long and painful study which
‘they demand discourages all the learned
‘men, who renounce and decry them, out
‘of despair of acquiring them. For my own
‘part, I am not discouraged by the obscurity

‘in which they are shrouded, no more than
‘by the difficulties which incessantly occur
‘in the search of chymical secrets, and in
‘the wonderful art of transmuting metals
‘into gold.

‘But I don’t consider,’ added he, recollecting himself, ‘that I speak to a young cavalier, to whom my discourse must in effect appear quite chimerical. A sample of my skill will dispose you much better than all I can say, to judge more favourably of my art.’ With these words, he took out of his pocket a phial full of red liquor; and then said — ‘Here is an elixir, which I composed this morning, of the juice of certain plants, distilled in an alembick; for I have employed almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of minerals and simples. You shall see its virtue put to the proof. The wine which we now drink at supper, though it is execrable, shall become excellent.’ So saying, he put into my bottle two drops of his elixir, which rendered my wine more delicious than the best that is drunk in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and, when once that is gained, the judgment is no longer used. Charmed with such a fine secret, and persuaded that he must be more than the devil who could find it out, I cried, in a transport of admiration

— ‘Oh, father! pray pardon me, if I took
‘you at first for an old fool; I now do justice
‘to your capacity, and need no more than
‘I have seen to be assured, that you could, if
‘you pleased, convert, in an instant, a bar
‘of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy
‘should I be, could I possess such an ad-
‘mirable science!’ — ‘Heaven preserve you
‘from such an acquisition,’ said the old man,
interrupting me with a profound sigh: ‘you
‘don’t know, my son, what a secret you
‘wish for. Instead of envying, rather pity
‘me, for having bestowed so much pains to
‘make myself unhappy. I live in continual
‘disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered,
‘and that my labours will be rewarded by
‘perpetual imprisonment. In this appre-
‘hension I lead a wandering life, disguised
‘sometimes like a priest or monk, and some-
‘times like a peasant or cavalier. Is it then
‘an advantage to know how to make gold
‘at that price? and are not riches a real pu-
‘nishment for those persons, who cannot
‘enjoy them in tranquillity?’

This discourse seeming to me very sen-
sible, I said to the sage — ‘There is nothing
‘like a quiet life: you give me a disgust at
‘the philosopher’s stone; and I will be con-
‘tented with learning of you, the future
‘events of my life.’ — ‘With all my heart,
‘child,’ answered he; I have already made
‘my remarks on your features; let us now

‘see your hand.’ I presented it to him with a confidence, that will not do me much honour in the opinion of some readers; and he, having examined it with great attention, exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm — ‘Ah! what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! What capricious successions of misfortune and prosperity! But you have already experienced a great deal of these vicissitudes. You have not a great many more afflictions to undergo; and a nobleman will confer upon you an agreeable destiny, not subject to change.’ After having assured me that I might depend on this prediction, he bade me farewell, and went out of the eating-house, leaving me quite engrossed with the things which I had heard. I did not at all doubt, that the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman in question; and, of consequence, nothing seemed more possible than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of probability, I could not have helped reposing an entire belief in the pretended monk, so much authority had he acquired in my opinion by his elixir. On my side, that I might hasten the happiness that was predicted to me, I resolved to attach myself to the marquis more than I had done to any of my masters; and, having formed this resolution, I retired to our house, in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman

leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

CHAP. X.

The Commission that the Marquis de Marialva gave to Gil Blas, and the Manner in which that faithful Secretary acquitted himself of it.

The marquis was not yet come from the lodgings of his actrels; and I found his valets de chambre playing at primero in his apartment, expecting his return; I made up to them, and we amused ourselves in making merry till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surpris'd to see me, and said with a gracious air, which made me guess that he returned very well satisfied with his evening's pleasure — 'How, Gil Blas! not yet 'a-bed?' I answered, that I was first willing to know what orders he had for me. 'I shall, 'perhaps,' resumed he, 'give you a commission to-morrow morning; but it will 'be time enough then, to tell you the particulars. Meanwhile, you may go to rest; and henceforth remember, that I 'dispense with your attendance in the evening, having occasion for nobody but my 'valets de chambre.'

After this explanation, which at bottom gave me a good deal of pleasure, since it spared me a piece of subjection which I should have sometimes felt in a very disagreeable manner, I left the marquis in his apartment, and, retiring to my garret, went to bed; but having no inclination to sleep, it came into my head that I should follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recollecting at night all that we have done in the day, in order to applaud our good, and condemn our bad actions.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct; but reproached myself with having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest as an excuse, that I could not in honour give the lie to a girl, who had nothing in view but to do me a pleasure; and that, in some shape, I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice in the cheat. Little satisfied with this apology, I answered, that I ought not, then, to have pushed things so far; and, that I must have a great deal of impudence to live with a nobleman, whose confidence I so ill repaid. In short, after a severe examination, I concluded, that if I was not a rogue, I was next kin to one.

From thence passing to the consequences, I represented to myself that I played a

very high game, in deceiving a man of quality; who, for my sins, would perhaps soon discover the trick. A reflection, so judicious, terrified me not a little; but the ideas of pleasure and interest, soon dissipated my fear; besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir, would have been sufficient to remove my doubts. I gave myself up, therefore, to the most agreeable fancies: I formed new rules of arithmetic, to reckon within myself the sum to which my wages would amount at the end of ten years service. To this I added, the gratifications which I should receive from my master; and measuring them by his liberal disposition, or rather by my own desires, I had an intemperance of imagination (if I may be allowed the expression), which set no bounds to my fortune; I was gradually lulled by so much wealth, and fell asleep in the very act of building castles in Spain.

Next day I got up at eight o'clock in the morning, to go and receive my patron's orders; but as I opened the door to go out, I was very much surprised to see him appear before me all alone, in his night-cap and morning gown. 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'last night, when I left your sister, I promised to be with her this morning; but an affair of consequence hinders me from keeping my word. Go, and assure her from me, that I am very much mortified at the disap-

‘pointment; and tell her, I shall certainly
‘sup with her in the evening.’ This is not
all,’ added he, putting into my hand a purse
with a little shagreen box enriched with
diamonds; ‘carry this my picture to her,
‘and keep this purse, of fifty pistoles, which
‘I give as a mark of the friendship I have al-
‘ready conceived for you.’ I took the pic-
ture with one hand, and the purse, I so
little deserved, with the other; and running
instantly to Laura, cried, in the excess of
joy with which I was transported — ‘Good!
‘the prediction is visibly accomplishing.
‘What a happiness is it to be the brother of
‘such a handsome and gallant girl! What a
‘pity it is, that there is not as much honour,
‘as profit and pleasure in it!’

Laura, contrary to the custom of people
of her profession, being used to rise early,
I surprised her at her toilet; where, in ex-
pectation of the Portuguese, she joined to
her natural beauty all the auxiliary charms
that the art of coquetry could bestow.
‘Amiable Estella!’ said I to her, when I en-
tered, ‘the loadstone of strangers! I may
‘now sit at table with my master, since he
‘has honoured me with a commission which
‘gives me that prerogative, and of which I
‘come to acquit myself. He cannot have
‘the pleasure of your company this morning,
‘as he proposed; but, for your consolation,
‘will sup with you at night; and he sends

‘you his picture, which, to me, seems a
‘matter of still greater consolation.’

I accordingly gave her the box, which, by the bright sparkling of the diamonds that adorned it, infinitely rejoiced her eye-sight. She opened it, and shutting it again, after having considered the painting superficially, returned to the stones, whose beauty she extolled, saying with a smile — ‘These are
‘copies which we women of the stage value
‘more than originals.’

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he entrusted me with the picture, had gratified me with a purse of fifty pistoles. ‘I congratulate thee upon thy good
‘fortune,’ said she to me; ‘this nobleman
‘begins where others even rarely end.’ — ‘To you, my dear creature,’ I replied, ‘I
‘owe this present: the marquis bestowed it
‘upon me solely on account of my being
‘your brother.’ — ‘I wish, said she, that
‘he would give you as much every day; for
‘I cannot express how dear thou art to me.
‘The very first moment I saw thee, I at-
‘tached myself to thee, by a tie too strong
‘for time to break. When I lost thee at Ma-
‘drid, I did not despair of finding thee again;
‘and, yesterday, when I saw thee, received
‘thee as a man whom fate had brought back
‘to my arms. In a word, my friend, Heaven
‘has destined us for one another: thou shalt
‘be my husband; but we must first enrich
‘ourselves: I want to have two or three

‘more intrigues, to make thee easy for
‘life.’

I thanked her in a polite manner, for the trouble she intended to take on my account; and, we insensibly engaged in a conversation that lasted till noon. Then I retired, to give an account to my master of the manner in which his present was received; and, though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I did not fail to compose by the way a fine compliment, which I intended to repeat in her name. But when I went home, I was told that the marquis had gone out; and it was decreed, that I should see him no more, as may be perceived in reading the following chapter.

CHAP. XI.

*Gil Blas receives a Piece of News, which
is like a Thunderbolt to him.*

I repaired to my eating house, where, meeting two men of a very agreeable conversation, I dined and sat at table with them till it was time to go to the play. Then we parted; they went about their own affairs, and I took the road to the theatre. I must observe, by the bye, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humour; mirth had reigned in my conversation with

these two gentlemen; my fortune wore a most smiling face: nevertheless my spirits sunk, without my knowing the reason, and without my being able to keep them up. It was, doubtless, a presage of the misfortune with which I was threatened.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came to me; and, telling me softly to follow him, carried me into a private place, and addressed me in this manner — ‘Signior Cavalier, I think it my duty to give you a very important piece of intelligence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva had, at first, a passion for Narcissa, my wife; and had already appointed a day to come and take a slice of my rib, when the artful Estella found means to break the bargain, and allure the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. You may well believe, that an actress does not lose such a good prey without vexation. My spouse has this affair at heart, and is capable of undertaking any thing to be revenged: she has now a fair occasion. Yesterday, if you remember, all our servants crowded to see you; when the under-candle-snuffer told some of the company, that he knew you very well, and that you was nothing less than Estella’s brother.

‘This report,’ added Melchior, ‘reached the ears of Narcissa; who did not fail to in-

‘terrogate the author, and he has confirmed
‘his assertion, by telling her, that he knew
‘you Arsenia’s valet, at the same time that
‘Estella, under the name of Laura, served
‘that actress at Madrid. My wife, charmed
‘with that discovery, will impart it to the
‘Marquis de Marialva, who is to be at the
‘play this evening. Take your measures
‘accordingly; if you are not actually Estel-
‘la’s brother, I advise you, as a friend, and
‘on account of our old acquaintance, to
‘provide for your safety. Narcissa, who
‘demands but one victim, has allowed me
‘to give you this notice, that you may pre-
‘vent any sinister accident by immediate
‘flight.’

It would have been superfluous in him
to say more of the matter. I thanked the
stage player for his information; and he
easily perceived, by my terrified look, that
I was not the man to give the candle-snuffer
the lie. I did not feel the least inclination
to depend upon my effrontery: I was not
even tempted to bid Laura farewell, lest she
should have insisted upon my facing it out.
I could very well conceive that she was an
actress of such skill, as to be able to extri-
cate herself out of the dilemma; but I saw
nothing except an infallible chastisement for
me, and I was not so much in love as to
brave it. My sole study being, therefore,
to escape with my household goods, (I mean

my baggage) I disappeared from the play-house in a twinkling, and with the utmost dispatch caused my portmanteau to be transported to the house of a carrier, who was to set out for Toledo at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only asylum; but I was not yet there; and I could not, without the utmost uneasiness, think on the time I had to stay in a city where I was afraid they would search for me even in the night.

I did not, for all that, omit going to supper at my eating-house, although I was as much disturbed as a debtor who knows that there are bailiffs at his heels. What I ate that evening did not, I believe, produce excellent chyle in my stomach. Being the miserable sport of fear, I examined every body that came into the hall; and when, unluckily, any ill-looking fellow entered (a common case in these places), I shivered with dread. Having supped in the midst of continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to the carrier's house, where I threw myself on a truss of fresh straw, and lay till the hour of our departure.

Meanwhile my patience was sufficiently exercised. I was attacked with a thousand disagreeable reflections: when I chanced to lumber, I beheld the furious marquis

mangling the fair face of Laura with blows, and demolishing every thing in her house; or heard him order his servants to make me perish under the bastinado. Then starting, I awoke; and, though to wake is usually a great comfort after such a terrible dream, waking was to me more dreadful, than the dream itself. Happily for me, the carrier delivered me from my affliction, by giving me notice that his mules were ready. I was immediately a-foot; and, thank Heaven! set out radically cured of chiromancy and Laura. In proportion as we moved from Granada, my mind resumed its tranquillity; and I began to enter into conversation with the carrier. I laughed at some pleasant stories he recounted, and lost, insensibly, all my fear. I enjoyed a sound sleep at Ubeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth arrived at Toledo.

My first care was to ask a direction for the Count de Polan's house, whither I repaired, very well persuaded that he would not suffer me to lodge in any other place: but I reckoned without my host; for I found nobody at home but the house-keeper, who told me that his master had set out in the evening for the castle of Leyva, having received a message that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I did not expect the absence of the count, which diminished the joy I felt at being in Toledo, and induced me to take another

resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither, reflecting that I might push myself forward at court, where a superior genius, I had heard, was not absolutely necessary to make a fortune. The very next day I took the advantage of a return horse, for that capital of Spain; and Fortune conducted me thither, in order to make me act higher parts, than those which I had performed.

CHAP. XII.

Gil Blas takes Lodgings in a House, where he contracts an Acquaintance with Captain Chincilla. The Character of that Officer; with an Account of the Affair that brought him to Madrid.

On my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my habitation in a house that was let into lodgings, where lived, among other people, an old captain, who had come from the farther end of New Castile, to solicit at court for a pension, which he thought he had but too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chincilla. It was not without astonishment, that I beheld him for the first time; being a man turned of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely meager. He wore a pair of thick whiskers, that curled up to his temples on each side. Over and

above his want of a leg and arm, a large plaister of green silk supplied the place of one eye, and the scars of many wounds appeared on his face. These things excepted, he was pretty much like another man. Besides, he had a good deal of understanding, and still more gravity; was scrupulous in his morals; and, in particular, piqued himself on his delicacy in point of honour.

After having conversed with him two or three times, he honoured me with his confidence. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He recounted to me on what occasion he had lost an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in his narration of battles and sieges was, that not one gasconade escaped him, nor even a word in his own praise; though I could have willingly pardoned him for boasting of the half of himself that remained, as an indemnification for the other half that he had lost. Those officers who return from the wars safe and sound, are seldom so modest.

But he told me, the thing that gave him the most concern was, that he had spent a considerable estate in his campaigns, so that now his whole fortune was reduced to about an hundred ducats a year, which was scarce sufficient to maintain his whiskers, clear his lodgings, and pay for writing his memorials.

memorials — ‘For, in short, Signior Cavalier,’ added he, shrugging up his shoulders, ‘I present one, thank God, every day, without being favoured with the least notice. One would say, that there is a wager between the prime minister and me, which of us should first fail, I in giving, or he in receiving them. I have also had the honour to present several to his majesty; but the curate sings no better than his clerk; and, in the mean time, my castle of Chinchilla sinks into ruins for want of reparation.’

‘We must despair of nothing,’ said I to the captain: you are now, perhaps, on the eve of seeing all your toils and troubles repaid with interest.’ — I ought not to flatter myself with that hope,’ replied Don Hannibal: ‘three days are not yet elapsed since I spoke to one of the minister’s secretaries; and, if I may believe what he said, I may make myself very easy.’ — ‘And, pray, what did he say?’ I replied. ‘Did he pretend that you was not worthy of a recompense? — ‘You shall judge,’ resumed Chinchilla. ‘The secretary told me very plainly — “Master What-d’ye-call-um, don’t brag so much of your zeal and fidelity. You have done no more than your duty, in exposing yourself to danger in behalf of your country. The glory alone which attends brave actions is a sufficient recompense, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard in particular. You must deceive yourself, therefore, if

“you look on the gratification you solicit as
“a debt due to your valour. Provided it
“be granted to you, you will owe it entire-
“ly to the favour and generosity of the
“king, who is pleased to think himself in-
“debted to those of his subjects who have
“distinguished themselves in the service of
“the state.” “You see by this,” pursued the
captain, “that I am still in his debt; and that,
“in all likelihood, I shall return as rich as
“I came’.

One naturally interests himself for a
brave man in adversity. I encouraged him
to persevere, and offered to write his me-
morials gratis. I went even so far as to
offer him my purse, and to conjure him to
take out of it what money he wanted. But
he was none of those who never wait for a
second invitation on these occasions; on the
contrary, he showed himself very delicate
on this point, and thanked me in a lofty man-
ner for my good-will. He afterwards told
me, that rather than be a burden to any
body, he had accustomed himself, by
degrees, to live so frugally, that the least
nourishment was sufficient for his subsistence.
This was but too true; and, therefore, he
was nothing but skin and bone. That he
might have no witness of his wretched re-
past, he used to lock himself up in his
chamber at meals. I obtained of him, how-
ever, by dint of entreaty, that we should

dine and sup together; and, deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, ordered more victuals and liquor than I had occasion for to be brought, and urged him to eat and drink. At first, he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my entreaties. After which, becoming insensibly more bold, he, of himself, assisted me in clearing my plate, and emptying my bottle.

When we had drunk four of five draughts, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment — ‘Truly,’ said he, with an air of gaiety, ‘you are very bewitching, Signior ‘Gil Blas; you make me do what you please; your behaviour divests me of all fear of ‘abusing your beneficent disposition.’ My captain, at that time, seemed so well rid of shame, that, if I had laid hold of the opportunity of pressing him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it: but I did not put him to the trial; contenting myself with having made him my messmate, and with taking the trouble not only of writing his memorials, but also of helping him to compose them. By means of having copied homilies, I had learned to turn a period, and was become a kind of author. The old officer, on his part, piqued himself on his knowledge in composition; so that, exerting ourselves together, through emulation, we produced morsels of eloquence, worthy of the most celebrated

masters of Salamanca. But in vain did each of us exhaust his genius, in sowing flowers of rhetoric in those memorials; it was no better, as the saying is, than sowing them on sand. Whatever expedient we fell upon to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no regard to it; a circumstance that did not at all engage the old invalid to make the eulogium of those officers who ruin themselves in the field. In his bad humour he cursed his fate, and wished Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries, at the devil.

To complete his mortification, it happened one day that, under his very nose, a poet, introduced by the duke d'Alva, having rehearsed, in the presence of the king, an ode on the birth of an infant, was gratified with a pension of five hundred ducats. I believe the maimed captain would have run mad on this occasion, had I not been at great pains to recompose him. 'What is the matter?' said I, seeing him quite beside himself; 'there is nothing in this that ought to give you uneasiness. Has it not been the privilege of poets, time immemorial, to make princes pay tribute to the Muses? There is not a crowned head in the world that does not gratify one of these gentlemen with a pension; and, between you and me, these sorts of rewards being generally transmitted to the knowledge of

‘posterity, immortalize the liberality of
‘kings; whereas the other recompenses
‘which they bestow, are often but so much
‘loss to their reputation. How many re-
‘wards did Augustus dispense, how many
‘pensions did he grant, of which we have
‘not the least intimation! But the most re-
‘mote posterity will always know, as we do,
‘that Virgil received near two hundred
‘thousand crowns from the bounty of that
‘emperor.

Notwithstanding all I could say to Don Hannibal, the fruits of the ode stuck in his stomach like lead; and, as he could not digest it, he resolved to abandon the whole of his pursuit. But first being willing, as his last effort, to present one other memorial to the Duke of Lerma, we went together to the house of that prime-minister, where we met a young man, who, having saluted the captain, said to him, with an affectionate air — ‘My dear old master, is it you! What
‘affair has brought you hither? if you have
‘occasion for a person of interest with his
‘highness, pray command me; I offer you
‘my good offices.’ — ‘How, Pedrillo!’ replied the captain; ‘to hear you talk, one
‘would imagine you enjoy some important
‘post in this family. — ‘I have, at least,’ answered the young man, ‘power enough
‘to be of service to an honest country gentleman like you.’ — ‘If that be the case,’

said the officer, with a smile, 'I have recourse to your protection.' — 'Tis granted,' resumed Pedrillo; 'let me know what is your business, and I promise you shall get some snips out of the minister.'

We had no sooner communicated the affair to this benevolent young fellow, than he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; in which, being satisfied, he assured us that we should hear of him next day; and then disappeared, without giving us the least hint of what he intended to do, or even telling us whether or not he belonged to the Duke of Lerma. I was curious to know who this Pedrillo was, that seemed so sprightly. 'He is a young fellow,' said the captain, 'who served me some years ago; and who, seeing me in want, left me to go in quest of a better place. I don't blame him for that; it is very natural for one to change for the better. He is a wag who does not want understanding, and is as intriguing as the devil: but, in spite of all his art, I don't depend a great deal upon the zeal which he has expressed in my behalf.' — 'Who knows,' said I, 'but he may be of some use? If he belongs, for example, to some one of the duke's principal officers, he may have it in his power to do you service. You are not ignorant that everything is carried, among the great, by cabal and intrigue; that they have favourite domestics who lead

‘them by the nose’; and these again, in their
‘turn, are governed by their own valets.’

Next morning, Pedrillo coming to our lodgings — ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘if I did
‘not explain myself yesterday, on the means
‘I have of serving Captain Chinchilla, it was
‘because we were not in a place proper for
‘such an explanation. Besides, I was wil-
‘ling to found the business, before I disclo-
‘sed it to you. You must know, then, that
‘I am the lackey and confidant of Signior
‘Rodrigo de Calderona, the Duke of Lerma’s
‘first secretary. My master, who is very
‘much addicted to gallantry, sups every
‘evening with an Arragonian nightingale,
‘that he keeps encaged near the court. She
‘is a very handsome girl, from Albarazin,
‘of good understanding, and sings to ad-
‘miration; therefore she is called Signiora
‘Sirena. As I carry a billet-doux to her
‘every morning, I have just now seen her;
‘I have proposed that she shall make Don
‘Hannibal pass for her uncle, and, on that
‘supposition, engage her gallant to protect
‘him. She is willing to undertake the affair,
‘for, besides the small advantage she foresees
‘in it for herself, she will be extremely glad
‘to be thought the niece of a brave gen-
‘tleman.’

Signior de Chinchilla made wry faces at
this proposal, and expressed a reluctance in

making himself an accomplice of such a prank, and still more, in suffering a she-adventurer to dishonour his family, by saying she belonged to it. He was disgusted at it, not only on account of himself, but also perceived in it (if I may be allowed the expression) a retrospective ignominy upon all his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unseasonable to Pedrillo; who, being shocked at it, exclaimed — ‘You jest sure, to take it in that view! You are such a set of people, you cottage ‘squires, your vanity ‘is quite ridiculous! — Signior Cavalier,’ he pursued, addressing himself to me, ‘are you not surpris’d at the scruples he makes? ‘Egad! it is a fine thing, indeed, to stand on such punctilios at court! Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape it assumes.’

I approved of what Pedrillo said, and we harangued the captain so successfully, that we prevailed upon him, in spite of himself, to become Sirena’s uncle. When we had gained the victory over his pride, we laid all our three heads together, in order to compose a new memorial for the minister, and it was revised, augmented, and corrected accordingly. I then wrote it out fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Arragonian lady; who, that very evening, put it into the hands of Signior Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner, that the secretary believing her really the captain’s niece,

promised to exert himself in his behalf. A few days after, we saw the effects of this our work. Pedrillo came to our lodging with an air of triumph: 'Good news!' said he to Chinchilla; 'the king is going to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, in which you shall not be forgot. But I am ordered to ask what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for my own part, I declare I'll have nothing at all. I prefer the pleasure of having contributed towards bettering my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case with our nymph of Albarazin; she is a little Jewishly inclined; when the business is to oblige her neighbour, she would take money of her own father, so you may judge if she will refuse it from a pretended uncle.'

'Let her mention her demand,' replied Don Hannibal; 'she shall, if she pleases, have yearly one third of the pension I obtain; and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic majesty were concerned in the bargain.' — For my own part,' replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury, 'I would cheerfully rely upon your word, because I know the value of it; but you have to do with a little creature who is naturally distrustful. Besides, she would much rather have, once for all, two thirds of the product advanced in ready money.'

— ‘Where the devil does she think I shall find it?’ cried the officer, hastily interrupting him; ‘does she think I am a money-broker? It seems you have not made her acquainted with my situation.’ — ‘Pardon me,’ replied Pedrillo; ‘she knows very well that you are as poor as Job: after what I have told her, she cannot be ignorant of your circumstances. But don’t give yourself any trouble about the matter; I am a man fertile in expedients. I know an old rogue of a lawyer who takes pleasure in lending his money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment, with security to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension for the like sum, which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will touch in effect, the interest included. With regard to the security, the lender will be contented with your castle of Chinchilla, such as it is; so that we shall have no dispute upon that score.’

The captain protested that he would accept of the conditions, if he should be lucky enough to have any share in the favours which were to be distributed next day. And he was not disappointed; being gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles on a certain government. As soon as he understood this piece of news he gave all the security that was demanded, transacted his

little affairs, and returned to New Castile with some pistoles in his pocket.

CHAP. XIII.

Gil Blas meets his dear Friend Fabricius at Court; their mutual Joy: they repair to a certain Place, where a curious Conversation happens between them.

I contracted a custom of going every morning to court, where I commonly spent two or three hours, in seeing the grandees pass and repass, though they appeared there without that splendour which surrounds them in other places.

One day, as I walked to and fro, and strutted through the apartments, making, like many others, a foolish figure enough, I perceived Fabricius, whom I had left at Valladolid in the service of an hospital director. What astonished me was, that he talked familiarly to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Santa-Cruz. Nay, these two noblemen seemed to listen to him with pleasure, and he was as well dressed as a man of quality. 'Am I not mistaken?' said I to myself. 'Can this be the son of Barber Nunnez! Perhaps, it is some young courtier who resembles him.' I did not long remain in doubt: the noblemen went away, and I accosted Fabricius. He knew

me at first sight; and, after having made me squeeze through the crowd with him, to get out of the apartments — ‘My dear ‘Gil Blas,’ said he, embracing me, ‘I am ‘rejoiced to see thee again! How art thou ‘employed at Madrid! art thou still in service, or hast thou some post at court? Give ‘me an account of all that has happened to ‘thee, since thy precipitate retreat from Valladolid.’ — ‘Thou askest me a great many ‘questions at once.’ said I; ‘and we are ‘not ‘now in a proper place to relate adventures.’ — ‘Thou art in the right,’ he replied; ‘we ‘shall be more at liberty in my lodgings. ‘Come, I will show thee the way; it is not ‘far from hence. I am quite my own ‘master, agreeably lodged, perfectly easy ‘in my circumstances, I am contented with ‘my situation, and happy because I think ‘myself so.’

I accepted the proposal, and followed Fabricius, who stopped before a very fine house, where he told me he lodged. We crossed a court, where, on one side, there was a great stair-case that led to very superb apartments; and, on the other, a small flight, equally dark and narrow, by which we ascended to the lodging he had so much extolled. It consisted of one room only, which my ingenious friend had divided into four, by thin deal boards. The first served as an anti-chamber to the second, where he

lay; he had made a closet of the third, and a kitchen of the last. The chamber and antichamber were lined with maps, and theses of philosophy; and the furniture was suitable to this kind of hanging; consisting of a large brocade bed, very much worn; old chairs covered with yellow serge, garnished with a fringe of Granada silk of the same colour; a table with gilt feet, covered with leather that seemed to be once red, and bordered with a tinsel fringe become black by the lapse of time; with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures coarsely carved. He had, instead of a bureau, in his closet, a little table; and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of paper lying on shelves, placed above one another, along the wall. His kitchen, which was conformable to the rest, contained some earthen ware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricius, after having given me time to consider his apartment, said — ‘What dost thou think of my lodging and economy? an’t thou enchanted with them?’ — ‘Yes, faith,’ I replied, smiling; ‘I am so. Thou must have certainly played thy cards well at Madrid, to be so well furnished. Thou doubtless enjoyest some post. — ‘Heaven forbid!’ replied he; ‘the business I follow is above all employments whatever. A man of fashion, to whom this house belongs,

‘gave me a room, which I have divided into
‘four, and furnished, as thou seest. I
‘meddle with nothing but what gives me
‘pleasure, and feel not the cravings of ne-
‘cessity.’ — ‘Pray be more explicit,’ said I,
interrupting him; ‘thou irritatest the desire I
‘have of knowing what thou dost.’ — ‘Well,’
said he, ‘thou shalt be satisfied, I am turned
‘author, and have commenced wit; I write
‘in verse as well as in prose, and am equal-
‘ly good at every thing.’

‘Thou a favourite of Apollo!’ cried I,
‘laughing. ‘This is what I never could have
‘divined. I should have been much less
‘surprized to have found thee in a quite con-
‘trary situation. What charms couldst thou
‘find in the condition of a poet? Methinks
‘these people are commonly despised in ci-
‘vil life, and are far from having an
‘established ordinary.” — ‘O fie!’ cried he,
in his turn; ‘thou talkest of those miserable
‘authors, whose works are the refuse of li-
‘braries and players. Is it to be wondered
‘at, that such writers are not esteemed? But
‘good authors, my friend, are on a better
‘footing in the world; and I may say, with-
‘out vanity, that I am one of that number.
— ‘I don’t at all doubt it,’ said I; ‘thou art
‘a young fellow of excellent genius: that
‘which is composed by thee cannot be bad.
‘All that I am at a loss to know is, how
‘thou wast first seized with the rage of
‘rhyme.’

‘Thy surprise is just,’ replied Nunnez;
‘I was so well satisfied with my situation
‘while in the service of Don Manuel Ordon-
‘nez, that I did not so much as wish for any
‘other. But my genius rising by degrees,
‘like that of Plautus, above servitude, I
‘composed a comedy, which was acted by
‘the company at Valladolid. Although it
‘was not worth a fig, it met with great
‘success; from whence I concluded, that the
‘public was a good milch-cow, which easily
‘parted with its store. This reflection, joined
to the furious desire of composing new pie-
‘ces, detached me from the hospital. The
‘love of poetry banished my passion for
‘riches; and resolving to repair to Madrid,
‘as the centre of wit, in order to form my
‘taste, I demanded my dismissal from the
‘director, who did not grant it without re-
‘gret, so much affection had he conceived
‘for me.’ ‘Fabricius,’ said he, ‘hast thou any
‘cause to be dissatisfied?’—‘No, Sir,’ I replied;
‘you are the best of masters, and I am pene-
‘trated with your generosity. But, you
‘know, one must follow his destiny. I find
‘I am born to eternalize my name by
‘works of genius.’—‘What folly possesses
‘thee!’ resumed the good citizen: ‘thou
‘hast already taken root in the hospital, and
‘art of that kind of wood of which stewards
‘and even directors are made. Thou art
‘going to leave what is solid, in order to
‘employ thyself in trifles; and thou

“wilt soon repent of thy imprudence, my
“child.”

“The director, seeing that he opposed my
“design to no purpose, paid my wages, and
“over and above, made me a present of fifty
“ducats, as a recompense for my faithful ser-
“vices: so that with this, and what I found
“means to glean in the little commissions
“that were entrusted to my integrity, I was
“in a condition, on my arrival at Madrid,
“to appear in a very handsome manner.
“This I failed not to do; though the writers
“of our nation don’t much pique themselves
“on their neat appearance. I soon became
“acquainted with Lopes de Vega, *) Miguel
“Cervantes de Saavedra, †) and other famous
“authors; but, in preference to these great
“men, I chose for my preceptor a young
“bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable
“Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius
“that ever Spain produced. He will not
“allow his works to be printed in his life-
“time, but contents himself with reading
“them to his friends; and, what is very re-
markable, Nature has indued him with the
“rare talent of succeeding in all kinds of
“poetry.

*) A celebrated dramatic poet, as much admired by the Spaniards as Shakespear is by the English. He is said to have composed eighteen hundred pieces for the stage, in verse, besides many other works.

†) The renowned author of Don Quixote.

poetry. He chiefly excels in satire, which, indeed, is his main strength. He is not (like Lucilius) a muddy river that sweeps along with it abundance of slime; but rather the Tagus, that rolls over golden sands its limpid stream. — ‘Thou drawest,’ said I to Fabricius, an agreeable picture of this same bachelor; and I don’t doubt that a person of such merit has a great number of envious enemies. — ‘All our authors,’ he replied, ‘good as well as bad, inveigh bitterly against him. “He delights,” says one, “in bombast, points, metaphors, and transposition.” — “His verses,” says another, “are as obscure as those which the Salian priests sang in their processions, and which nobody understood.” Others again find fault with his composing sometimes sonnets or romances, sometimes comedies, stanzas, and acrostics; as if he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse all the great masters in their own different ways. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is cherished by all thanks of people, from the highest to the lowest.

‘It was under this skilful master that I served my apprenticeship; and I dare say it has appeared: for I have so happily imbibed his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces which he would not blush to father. I opened my ware (according to his example) in the houses of the great, where I am wonderfully well re-

‘ceived, and have to do with people who
‘are not difficult to please. ‘Tis true, in-
‘deed, my successful beginning has been of
‘no disservice to my later compositions. In
‘short, I am beloved by several noblemen,
‘and in particular, live with the Duke de
‘Medina Sidonia, as Horace once lived with
‘Mæcenas. You see,’ added Fabricius, ‘in
‘what manner I was metamorphosed into
‘an author. I have nothing else to relate;
‘so that it is now thy turn, Gil Blas, to
‘rehearse thy exploits’

I opened accordingly; and suppressing every trivial circumstance, gave him the detail he desired: after which, it being dinner-time, he took out of his ebony cupboard a couple of napkins, some bread, the remains of a shoulder of roast mutton, a bottle of excellent wine, and we sat down at the table with all the gaiety of two friends, who meet after a long separation. ‘Thou ‘leepest,’ said he, ‘my free and independent ‘life; I might, if I would, go and dine every ‘day with the people of quality; but, be- ‘sides that the poetic inclination keeps me ‘oftentimes at home, I am a sort of an ‘Aristippus; and can equally accommodate ‘myself to company and solitude, to ‘affluence and frugality.’ We liked the wine so well, that there was a necessity of taking another bottle from the store; and, towards the end of the repast,

I expressed a desire of seeing some of his productions. He immediately searched among his papers for a sonnet, which he read aloud with great emphasis. Nevertheless, in spite of the charms of his reading, I found the performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend the meaning of one syllable. Perceiving my ignorance — ‘This sonnet,’ said he, ‘does not seem very clear to thy apprehension, is it not so?’ I owned to him that I could have wished it had been more plain. Upon which he fell a laughing at my expense. ‘If this sonnet,’ he resumed, ‘is not intelligible, so much the better. The ‘natural and simple won’t do for sonnets, ‘odes, and other works that require the ‘sublime. The sole merit of these is in their ‘obscurity; and it is sufficient if the poet ‘himself thinks he understands them.’ — ‘You joke, friend!’ said I, interrupting him; ‘good sense and perspicuity ought to be ingredients in poetry of all kinds whatever: ‘and if thy incomparable Gongora writes not more plainly than thou dost, I confess my ‘opinion of him sinks apace. He must be a ‘poet who can deceive no other age than ‘his own. Let us now have a specimen of ‘thy prose.’ Hereupon, Nunnez produced a preface, which (he said) he intended to prefix to a collection of comedies that he had then in the press; and, having read it, asked my opinion. ‘I am,’ said I, ‘no better pleased with thy prose than with thy

‘poetry. Thy sonnet is a piece of verbose
‘fustian; and thy preface is composed of
‘far-fetched expressions, words that have
‘not the public stamp, perplexed phrases; in
‘a word, thy style is quite peculiar to thy-
‘self; and the books of our best authors, an-
‘cient as well as modern, are written in a
‘quite different manner.’ — ‘Poor Ignora-
‘mus!’ cried Fabricius: ‘thou dost not know,
‘then, that every prosaic writer who now
‘aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen,
‘affects that singularity of style, and those
‘odd expressions, which shock thee so much.
‘There are of us five or six bold innovators,
‘who have undertaken to make a thorough
‘change in the language; and we will ac-
‘complish it (please God!) in spite of Lope
‘de Vega, Cervantes, and all the fine geniuses
‘who cavil at our new modes of speech. We
‘are seconded by a number of partisans of
‘distinction, and have even some theologians
‘in our cabal.

‘After all,’ added he, ‘our design is com-
‘mendable; and, prejudice apart, we are
‘more valuable than those natural writers
‘who speak like the common run of man-
‘kind. I don’t know for what reason they
‘are esteemed by so many persons of honour.
‘Their manner was proper enough at Athens
‘or Rome, where there was no distinction
‘in point of speaking; so that Socrates said
‘to Alcibiades, the people was an excellent

‘Schoolmaster; but at Madrid, we have both
 ‘a good and a bad language, and our cour-
 ‘tiers express themselves quite otherwise than
 ‘our citizens, believe me. In short, our
 ‘new style overtops that of our antagonists.
 ‘I will, by one example, make thee per-
 ‘ceive the difference between the gentility
 ‘of our diction, and the flatness of theirs.
 ‘They would say, quite plainly, for instance
 — “Interludes embellish a comedy:” while
 ‘we, with more spirit, would pronounce
 — “Interludes create beauty in a comedy.
 ‘Take notice of that: *create beauty*. Dost
 ‘thou perceive all the brilliancy, all the deli-
 ‘cacy, all the prettiness, of the expression?

I interrupted my innovator with a loud
 laugh. ‘Go, Fabricius,’ said I, ‘thou art
 ‘quite an original with this thy precious
 ‘language.’ — ‘And thou,’ answered he, ‘art
 ‘no better than a beast, with thy natural
 ‘style. “Go,” said he, repeating the words
 ‘of the Archbishop of Granada; “go and tell
 ‘my treasurer to give you an hundred du-
 ‘cats; and Heaven direct you with that
 ‘sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; — I wish you a
 ‘great deal of good fortune, with a little
 ‘more taste!’

I redoubled my mirth at this sally; and
 Fabricius, forgiving me for having spoken so
 irreverently of his writings, lost nothing of
 his good humour. We finished our second

bottle; and, getting up from table in a pretty good trim, went out with a design to walk in the Prado: but, passing by the door of a tavern, we took it in our heads to go in.

This place was usually frequented by good company; and I observed in two separate halls, a great many cavaliers, amusing themselves with different diversions. In one, they played at drafts and primero, and, in the other, ten or twelve persons were listening very attentively to a dispute between two professed wits. We had no occasion to go near them, in order to learn that a metaphysical proposition was the subject of their dispute: for they talked with such warmth and transport, that they looked like people possessed. I imagine, if Eleazar's ring *) had been put under their noses, we should have seen devils issue with their breath. 'Good God!' said I to my companion, 'what passion; what lungs! 'These disputants were certainly born to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced. — 'Yes, truly,' he replied;

*) Eleazar was a famous magician, who cast out devils, by affixing to the nose of the possessed a certain mystical ring, which the demon no sooner smelled, than he abandoned the patient. In performing before the Emperor Vespasian, he commanded the devil to upset a pitcher of water, which the demon immediately complied with, to the astonishment of the spectators.

‘these people seem to be of the race of Novius, †) that Roman banker, whose voice exceeded the noise of carmen. But,’ added he, ‘what gives me the greatest disgust at their discourse is, that our ears are stunned to no purpose.’ We removed at a distance from those vociferous metaphysicians, and by that expedient I prevented a violent head-ache which had begun to seize me.

We went and sat down in the corner of the other hall, whence, while we drank refreshing liquors, we examined the cavaliers as they came in and went out. As Nunnez knew almost all of them — ‘Egad!’ cried he, ‘the dispute of our philosophers won’t be soon over: here are fresh reinforcements arriving; these three men will engage in the fray. But seest thou these two originals going out? That little, swarthy, withered creature, whose lank straight hair falls down in equal portions, before and behind, is called Don Julien de Vellanunno, and is a young judge who affects the beau. One of my friends and I going to dine

†) Novius, from being a slave, came to be a rich citizen of Rome, and turned usurer: which infamy Horace has perpetuated, and has also immortalized the loudness of his voice, in the sixth Satire of his first book.

—— *At hic si plaustra ducenta
Concurrentque foro tria funera magna sonabit,
Cornua quod, vineatque tubas.*

‘with him t’other day, surprized him in a
‘pretty singular occupation. He was di-
‘verting himself in his closet, by throwing
‘away the writings of a process of which he
‘is to make a report, and making a grey-
‘hound bring them back again to him, while
‘the dog tore them to pieces very handsomely.
‘The name of that licentiate with the cop-
‘per nose, who accompanies him, is Don
‘Cherubin Tonto, a canon of the church of
‘Toledo, the weakest mortal in the world;
‘though by his sprightly smiling air, you
‘would imagine he had a great deal of wit.
‘He has bright sparkling eyes, with an arch
‘malicious sneer: so that one would be apt
‘to think him a wag. When he hears a de-
‘licate performance read, he listens with
‘such attention as seems full of understand-
‘ing, and all the while comprehends nothing
‘at all of the matter. He dined with us at
‘the judge’s house, where an infinite num-
‘ber of witty things were said; but he spoke
‘never a word, though he applauded them
‘with grimaces and gestures that seemed
‘even superior to the fallies that were
‘uttered.’

‘Dost thou know,’ said I to Nunnez,
‘these two shabby fellows who, with their
‘elbows on the table, sit in a corner, and
‘converse together in whispers?’ — No!’
said he, ‘their faces are quite unknown to
‘me; but in all likelihood they are coffee-

‘house politicians who censure the govern-
‘ment. Mark that genteel cavalier, who
‘whistles as he walks through the hall, and
‘supports himself sometimes on one foot,
‘sometimes on another; that is Don An-
‘gustin Moreto, a young poet, who was born
‘with some genius, but flatterers and
‘ignorant people have almost turned his
‘brain. The man whom he accosts is one
‘of his confederates, who is also moon-
‘struck, and rhymes in prose.

‘More authors still!’ cried he, showing
me two well-dressed men coming in; ‘one
‘would think they had made a rendezvous
‘here, to pass in review before thee. These
‘are, Don Bernard Dessenguado, and Don
‘Sebastian de Villa Viciosa. The first is a
genius full of gall, an author born under
‘the planet of Saturn, a malicious mortal,
‘whose pleasure consists in hating all the
‘world, and is himself beloved by nobody.
‘As for Don Sebastian, he is a young fellow
‘of candour, who will let nothing lie upon
‘his conscience; he lately brought a perform-
‘ance on the stage, which had an extra-
‘ordinary run; and now he has printed it,
‘that he may no longer abuse the esteem of
‘the public.’

The charitable pupil of Gongora was
going on in explaining the figures of this
picture, which shifted so often to the view,

when a gentleman belonging to the Duke de Medina Sidonia came and interrupted him, saying — ‘Signior Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, in order to let you know that his grace would speak with you immediately at his own house.’ Nunnez, who knew that a grandee’s wishes cannot be too soon satisfied, quitted me in a trice, to go and wait upon his Mæcenas; while I remained very much astonished to hear him honoured with the appellation of Don, and see him thus become noble in despite of his sire, Master Chrysoptom the barber.

CHAP. XIV.

Fabricius introduces Gil Blas to the Service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian Nobleman.

I was so desirous of seeing Fabricius again, that I visited him early next morning. ‘Good morrow!’ said I, when I entered, ‘Signior Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather glow-worm, of the Asturian nobility!’ At these words he laughed heartily. ‘Thou hast observed, then,’ cried he, ‘that I am dubbed a Don!’ — ‘Yes, Mr. Gentleman,’ I replied; ‘and, give me leave to tell you, that when you recounted your metamorphosis yesterday, you forgot the best part of it.’ — ‘I did so,’ answered he;

‘but truly, if I have assumed that honour-
‘able title, it was not so much with a view
‘to gratify my own vanity, as to accommo-
‘date myself to that of others. ‘Thou knowest
‘the humour of the Spaniards; they make
‘no account of an honest man, if he has the
‘misfortune to be both poor and meanborn.
‘I must tell thee too, that I see so many people
‘call themselves Don Francisco, Don Pedro,
‘or Don What-you-will, that if there is no
‘cheat in the case, thou wilt allow nobility
‘to be a very common thing; and agree,
‘that a plebeian of merit honours it by his
‘association. But let us change the subject,’
added he. ‘Last night I supped at the Duke
‘de Medina Sidonia’s; where, among other
‘guests, was Count Galliano, a Sicilian
‘nobleman of the first rank; and the conver-
‘sation turning on the ridiculous effects of
‘self-love, I, charmed that I had it in my
‘power to entertain the company on that
‘subject, regaled them with the story of the
‘homilies. Thou mayest well imagine they
‘laughed heartily, and censured the arch-
‘bishop as he deserved. This produced no
‘bad effect for thee, for thou wast pitied by
‘every body; and Count Galiano, after
‘having asked a good many questions con-
‘cerning thee, to which thou mayest believe
‘I made suitable answers, desired me to
‘bring thee to his house. I was just now
‘going in quest of thee, to conduct thee
‘thither. I suppose he intends to offer thee

‘the place of one of his secretaries; and I
‘advise thee to accept of it. The count is
‘rich, and spends like an ambassador at Ma-
‘drid: he is come to court, it is said, to
‘confer with the Duke of Lerma, about the
‘crown demesnes which that minister de-
‘signs to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count
‘Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems to be ge-
‘nerous, just, and open; and thou canst not
‘do better than attach thyself to him; he is
‘the man, in all probability, who is desti-
‘ned to enrich thee, according to what was
‘foretold in thy behalf at Granada.’

‘I had resolved,’ said I to Nunnez, ‘to
‘live at large a little, and enjoy myself a good
‘while, before I should go to service again;
‘but thou speakest to me of this Sicilian
‘count in such a manner, as induces me to
‘change my resolution, and even to wish I
‘was already in his family.’— ‘Thou mayest
‘soon be there,’ he replied, ‘or I am much
‘mistaken.’ At the same time we went out
together to the count, who lodged in the
house of his friend Don Sancho d’Avila,
then in the country.

We found in the court a great number
of pages and footmen, clothed in a livery
equally rich and gay; and in the anti-cham-
ber several ushers, gentlemen, and other
officers, all magnificently dressed; but
withal so ugly, that they looked like a com-

pany of apes in Spanish garb. There are figures, both of men and women, on which all art is thrown away.

Don Fabricius having sent in his name, was immediately introduced into a room, whither I followed him, and found the count in his morning-gown, sitting on a sofa, and drinking chocolate. We saluted him with all the demonstrations of the most profound respect; and he honoured us with an inclination of the head, accompanied by such a gracious smile, as at once gained my heart. A wonderful effect, though an ordinary one, which a favourable reception from the great produces in our breasts! They must receive us very ill indeed, before we be disgusted at their behaviour.

Having drunk his chocolate, he amused himself some time in playing with a large baboon that sat by him, and was called Cupid. I don't know for what reason the name of that god was bestowed on this animal, unless it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing else. Such as it was, however, it did not fail to give vast delight to its master, who was so much charmed with its merry tricks, that he hugged it incessantly in his arms. Though Nunnez and I were not much diverted with the gambols of this beast, we feigned ourselves enchanted with its per-

formances; which pleased the Sicilian so much, that he suspended the pleasure he enjoyed in this pastime, to tell me — ‘Friend, you have it in your option to be one of my secretaries: if you like the place, I will give you two hundred pistoles a year, without any other recommendation than that of Don Fabricio.’ — ‘My lord,’ cried Nunnez, ‘I am bolder than Plato, who had not courage enough to answer for one of his friends, whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius. I am not afraid of bringing reproaches upon myself, by vouching for my friend.’

I thanked the Asturian poet with a low bow, for his obliging confidence; then, addressing myself to my patron, assured him of my zeal and fidelity. This nobleman no sooner perceived that I relished his proposal, than he ordered his steward to be called; to whom having communicated something in a whisper, he said, Gil Blas, I will tell you presently what is to be the nature of your employment; meanwhile you may follow my steward, who has received orders concerning you.’ I accordingly obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the count and Cupid.

The steward, who was a most subtle Mesfine, conducted me to his apartment, where he loaded me with civilities; and sending for the taylor, who had equipped

the whole family, ordered him to make for me, with all dispatch, a suit of clothes, of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The taylor, having taken measure of me, and retired — ‘As for your lodging,’ said the Mesinese, ‘I know a chamber that will exactly fit you. But have you breakfasted?’ added he. When I answered in the negative — ‘Ah! poor lad!’ said he, ‘why did not you speak? Come, I will show you to a place, where, thank Heaven, you may have what you will for the asking.’

So saying, he carried me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a true Neapolitan, every whit as cunning as the Messenian. It might be said of him and the steward, ‘*These two make a pair.*’ This honest butler, with five or six of his friends, were cramming themselves with ham, cold tongue, and other relishing bits, which obliged them to redouble their draughts. We joined these hearty cocks, and assisted them in their attacks upon the count’s best wines. While this scene passed in the buttery, another such was acted in the kitchen; the cook also treated three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who filled their bellies with rabbit and partridge pies. The very scullions enjoyed themselves on what they could pilfer; so that I thought myself in a house abandoned to pillage. Yet these

were but trifles, in comparison to what I did not see.

CHAP. XV.

Count Galiano invests Gil Blas with an Employment in his House.

I went to fetch my baggage to my new habitation; and, when I returned, the count was at dinner with several noblemen, and the poet Nunnez, who called for what he wanted with an easy air, and mingled in the conversation. Nay, I observed that every word he spoke afforded pleasure to the company. What a fine thing is genius! A man of wit can easily turn himself into all shapes.

I dined with the officers, who were treated pretty much in the same manner as our patron; and, in the afternoon, retired to my chamber, where I began to reflect on my condition.

‘Well, Gil Blas,’ said I to myself, ‘thou art now in the service of a Sicilian count, with whose real character thou art utterly unacquainted. If we may judge by appearance, thou wilt be in this family like a fish in the water; but we must swear to nothing: and thou oughtest to distrust thy fate,

'fate, the malignity of which thou hast but
'too often experienced. Besides, thou dost
'not know for what employment thou art
'retained: he has already two secretaries and
'a steward; what service then does he ex-
'pect from thee? It looks as if he intends to
'make thee his Mercury, in good time! One
'cannot be on a better footing with a noble-
'man, in order to make his way to a good
'post. He who limits himself to honourable
'services only, moves slowly, step by step,
'and seldom gains his point at last.'

While I was engrossed by these fine re-
flections, a lackey came to tell me, that
all the company who had dined at our house
were gone home, and that the count
wanted to speak with me. I flew instantly
to his apartment, where I found him lying
on his couch, ready to take his afternoon's
nap, with his baboon, which always bore
him company.

'Come hither, Gil Blas,' said he; take
a chair, and listen to what I am going to say.
'I obeyed his orders, and he spoke to me in
these terms: 'Don Fabricio has told me,
'that, among other good qualities, you pos-
'sess that of attaching yourself to your
'masters; and that you are a young man of
'incorruptible integrity. These two quali-
'fications determined me to take you into
'my service; for I have great occasion for an

‘affectionate domestic, who will espouse my
‘interest, and employ his whole attention
‘in husbanding my estate. I am rich, it is
‘true; but my yearly expence greatly ex-
‘ceeds my income. The reason is plain; I
‘am plundered by my servants, and live in
‘my own house as if I was in a forest among
‘robbers. I suspect my butler and steward
‘of having a fellow-feeling the one with the
‘other; and this is more than enough to
‘ruin me from top to bottom. You will
‘say, if I have reason to think them rogues,
‘why don’t I turn them away? But where
‘shall I find others made of a different kind
‘of stuff? I will be satisfied with having
‘them both observed by a man who shall
‘have a right to inspect their conduct: and
‘you are the person whom I have chosen
‘for that commission; of which, if you ac-
‘quit yourself well, be assured that you shall
‘not serve an ungrateful master, for I will
‘take care to procure for you a very advan-
‘tageous settlement in Sicily.

Having spoken thus, he dismissed me; and that very evening, in presence of all his domestics, I was proclaimed superintendant of the family. This did not give the Messinese and Neapolitan great mortification at first, because they looked upon me as a jolly companion, of a good composition; and concluded, that by giving me a share of the spoil, they should be allowed to go on in their own course.

But they looked very silly next day, when I declared to them, that I was an enemy to all misdemeanour. I demanded of the butler an account of the provisions; I visited the cellar, and took an inventory of every thing he had in his charge; I mean, table-linen and plate. I then exhorted them to be saving of our patron's wealth; to lay out with economy; and ended my advice, by protesting to them, that I would inform that nobleman of every thing that I should observe amiss in his house. I did not stop here: resolving to have a spy, who might discover if there was any sinister intelligence between them. I cast my eyes on a scullion; who, being won by my promises, assured me that I could not have applied to a more proper person, to get notice of every thing that happened in the house; that the butler and steward were in a confederacy, and burnt the candle at both ends; that they daily secreted one half of the provision that was bought for the family; that the Neapolitan took care of a lady who lived opposite to the college of St. Thomas, and that the Messenian entertained another at the Sunagate: that these two gentlemen sent all sorts of provisions to their nymphs every morning; and that the cook also dispatched savoury messes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood; and that, in consideration of his services to the other two, to whom he was entirely devoted, he disposed, as

they did, of the wines in the cellar: in short, that these three domestics occasioned a most horrible expense in the count's house. 'If you doubt my report,' added the scullion, 'take the trouble of going to-morrow morning, about seven o'clock to the college of St. Thomas, and you shall see me loaded with a basket, which will change your doubts into certainty.' — 'So, said I to him, 'thou art agent to these gallant purveyors?' — 'I am,' he replied, employed by the butler, and one of my comrades acts for the steward.'

I had the curiosity to repair next morning, at the appointed hour, to the college of St. Thomas, where I did not wait long for my spy, whom I saw coming along with a huge basket filled with butchers meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of the particulars, of which I formed in my pocket-book a short verbal process, that I went and showed to my master, after having told the trencher scraper that he might execute his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who was naturally passionate, resolved in his first transport to turn away the Neapolitan and Messenian; but after having reflected more coolly, contented himself with dismissing the last, to whose place I succeeded; so that my office of superintendant was suppressed soon

after its creation ; and truly I was not sorry for it ; for it was, properly speaking, no other than the honourable employment of a spy, and a post which had nothing substantial in it ; whereas, by being made steward, I became master of the strong box, and that is every thing. The steward always possesses the first rank among the domestics of a great family ; and there are so many small perquisites attached to his administration, that he may grow rich, even though he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, whose budget was not yet exhausted, observing my brutal zeal, that I got up every morning to see and keep an account of what victuals were brought, no longer secreted a part, but the rascal continued to purchase the same quantity as before. By this stratagem, increasing the profit he drew from the refuse of the table, which was his perquisite, he found himself in a condition to treat his charmer at least with dressed victuals, if he could not furnish her with raw provision. In short, the devil lost nothing by this reformation, and the count was not a whit the better for having a phoenix of stewards in his service. The superabundance that I then perceived at every meal made me guess this new trick, which I immediately defeated, by retrenching what was superfluous in every course. This I did, however, with such prudence,

that the alteration could not be perceived: one would have thought that there was still the same profusion; and yet, by this economy, I considerably diminished the expense. This was what my patron required; he wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent; for his avarice was subordinate to his ostentation.

There was yet another abuse to be reformed: I found the wine ran out apace; if, for example, twelve cavaliers happened to dine with my master, they would exhaust fifty, and sometimes five dozen of bottles. I was astonished at this waste; and, not doubting that there must be some roguery in the case, consulted my oracle, that is, my drudge, with whom I very often had private conferences, and who made a faithful report of every thing that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was not in the least suspected. He told me, that the waste of which I complained, proceeded from a new league between the butler, cook, and those lackies who filled the wine, and who carried off all the bottles half emptied, which were afterwards shared among the confederates. I spoke to the footmen on this subject, and threatened to turn them out of doors, if ever they should think proper to repeat this practice: upon which they were reclaimed. My master, whom I took care to advertise of the most minute things

which I performed for his advantage, loaded me with praises, and grew every day more and more fond of me; and I, in order to reward the good services of the scullion, created him cook's assistant.

The Neapolitan was enraged to find me always on the catch with him; and was cruelly mortified with the checks which he underwent, whenever he presented his accounts to me; for, that I might pare his nails the closer, I took the trouble of going to market, to learn the price of meat, just before he went thither; and, as he attempted to impose upon me afterwards, gave him a vigorous repulse. I was very well persuaded, that he cursed me an hundred times a day; but the subject of his maledictions hindered me from dreading their force. I cannot imagine how he could bear my persecutions, and remain in the service of the Sicilian nobleman. Doubtless, in spite of all my endeavours, he found his account in perseverance.

Fabricio, whom I frequently saw, and to whom I recounted all my hitherto unheard exploits, in quality of steward, was more disposed to blame than applaud my conduct. 'God grant,' said he, one day, 'that thou mayest be recompensed for all this disinterestedness; but, between thee and me, I believe it would not fare the worse with thee, if thou wast not quite so rough with the butler.' — 'How!' answer-

‘ed I; ‘shall that robber charge in his bill
‘ten pistoles for a fish that did not cost four,
‘and I pass over that article?’ — ‘Why not?’
‘he replied, coldly; ‘let him give thee
‘the half of the surplus, according to custom.
‘In good faith, my friend!’ continued he,
‘shaking his head, ‘you are a mere ninny;
‘and, in all appearance, will grow grey in
‘servitude, since you neglect to slay the eel
‘while it is in your hand, Take my word
‘for it, Fortune resembles those brisk airy
‘coquettes, who despise the gallant who
‘stands upon ceremony.’

I only laughed at the discourse of Nun-
nez; who laughed again in his turn, and
would have persuaded me that he had only
spoken in jest, being ashamed of having given
me bad counsel in vain. I continued firm
in the resolution of being always zealous and
faithful: I felt no inclination to be other-
wise; and, I dare say, that in four months
I saved to my master, by my economy, three
thousand ducats at least.

CHAP. XIV.

An Accident happens to Count Galliano's Baboon, which is the Cause of great Affliction to that Nobleman. Gil Blas falls sick: the Consequence of his Distemper.

ABOUT this time, the repose of the family was strangely disturbed by an accident which will seem trifling to the reader, though it turned out a very serious matter to the servants, and especially to me. Cupid, the baboon of which I have made mention, that animal so beloved by our master, attempting one day to leap from one window to another, acquitted himself so ill in the performance, that he fell down into the court, and dislocated his leg. The count no sooner understood this misfortune, than he uttered such piercing cries, that they were heard all over the neighbourhood; and in the excess of his grief, attacking all his servants without exception, he had well nigh made a clear house. His fury, however, was limited to cursing our negligence, and abusing us, without sparing terms of reproach. He sent immediately for those surgeons who were most expert in fractures and dislocated bones; and who, having visited the patient's leg, reduced it, and applied bandages accordingly. But, though all of them assured him there was no

danger, my master retained one of them in the house, to be always near the animal, until it was perfectly cured.

I should be to blame, if I passed over in silence the grief and anxiety which preyed upon the heart of the Sicilian nobleman, during the whole time of the cure. Will it be believed, that all the day he did not stir from his dear Cupid! He was always present, when he was dressed, and got out of bed to visit him two or three times every night. But the most troublesome circumstance of all was, that every domestic in the family, and I in particular, were always up, that we might be at hand to be sent where-soever it should be thought proper for the service of this ape. In a word, we had no rest in the house, till such time as this plaguy beast, having recovered of his fall, betook himself again to his usual caperings and tumblings. After this, can we refuse to credit the report of Suetonius, when he says, Caligula loved his horse to such a degree, that he bestowed upon him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him, and even designed to make him consul? My patron was no less charmed with his baboon, which he would willingly have created a corregidor, had it been in his power.

An unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had surpassed all the valets in demonstrations of concern, that I might, in so

doing, make my court to my master; and underwent such fatigue in behalf of Cupid, that I fell sick upon it, and was seized with such a violent fever that I lost my senses, and know not how I was managed for fifteen days, during which I was in a manner between life and death. This only I know, that my youth struggled so successfully against the remedies that were administered, that at length I recovered my understanding. The first use I made of it was, to perceive that I was not in my own chamber; and wanting to know the reason, I asked it of an old woman who attended me; but she replied, that I must not speak, for the physician had expressly forbid it. When we are in good health, we commonly laugh at the doctor; but, when we are sick, we calmly submit to his prescription.

I thought proper, therefore, to hold my tongue, how much soever I longed to converse with my nurse; and was engaged in reflections on this subject, when two spruce beaus entered, dressed in velvet, with very fine ruffled linen. I imagined they were two noblemen, friends of my master, who, out of consideration for him, came to see me. On this supposition, I made an effort to sit up, and showed my respect by taking off my cap; but my nurse laid me all along again, and told me that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor coming to my bedside, felt my pulse, considered my countenance, and observing all the symptoms of an immediate cure, assumed an air of triumph, as if he had greatly contributed to it; saying, that there was nothing wanting to finish the work but a purge, after which he might boast of having performed a fine cure. When he had spoken thus, he made the apothecary write a prescription; which, while he dictated, he viewed himself in a glass, adjusted his perriwig, and made such grimaces, that I could not help laughing, in spite of my weakly condition. He then made me a solemn bow, and went away, much more engrossed by his own figure, than by the medicines he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who had not come hither for nothing, prepared himself for doing something which may be easily guessed; whether he was afraid that the old woman could not acquit herself with dexterity enough, or wanted to operate himself, in order to enhance the value of his ware; but, with all his address, I do not know how it happened, the operation was scarce performed, when I restored to the operator all that he had given me, and left his velvet suit in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune annexed to pharmacy, and wiping himself with a towel in silence, went away, resolving to

make me pay the scourer, to whom he was certainly obliged to lend his clothes.

He returned next morning more plainly dressed, though he had no risk to run that day, in bringing the physic which the doctor had prescribed the night before; for I not only felt myself mending every moment, but had such an aversion, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where those gentlemen receive the power of slaying men with impunity.

In this disposition, I swore that I would take no more medicine, and wished Hippocrates at the devil, with all his gang. The apothecary, who did not mind what became of his composition, provided he was paid for it, left it on the table, and retired, without speaking a word. I ordered the villainous medicine to be thrown out at a window immediately, being so much prepossessed against it, that I should have thought myself poisoned had I swallowed it. To this stroke of disobedience I added another. I broke silence; and told my nurse, in a peremptory tone, that I absolutely insisted on knowing what was become of my master. The old woman, who was apprehensive of exciting in me a dangerous emotion, should she gratify my curiosity; or resolving, per-

haps, to irritate my distemper by her obstinacy, made no answer; but I persisted with so much passion, that she replied, at length — ‘Signior Cavalier, you are now your own master; Count Galiano is gone back to Sicily.’

I could not believe what I heard, and yet there was nothing more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my distemper, fearing that I should die at his house, had the generosity to order me to be transported, with my little effects, to a hired room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to Providence and the care of a nurse. In the interim, having received an order from court, obliging him to repass into Sicily, he set out with such precipitation, that I was not so much as thought of; whether he already numbered me with the dead, or that people of quality are troubled with short memories.

My nurse informed me of all this; and likewise assured me, it was she who had called the physician and apothecary, that I might not perish for want of assistance. This comfortable news threw me into a profound revery. Adieu, my advantageous settlement in Sicily! my sanguine hopes, farewell! ‘When any great misfortune happens to you,’ says a certain pope, ‘examine yourself well; and you will always perceive that

‘it was, in some measure, owing to your own fault.’ No disparagement to this holy Father, I cannot see how I contributed to my own mischance on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras with which I had stuffed my imagination vanished, the next thing that I concerned myself about was my portmanteau, which I ordered her to bring to my bedside, that I might examine it. I sighed, when I perceived it open, crying — ‘Ah, my dear portmanteau! my only consolation! you have been, I see, at the mercy of strangers.’ — ‘No, no, Signior Gil Blas,’ said the old woman, ‘don’t be uneasy; nothing is stolen from you. I have protected your box, as if it had been my own honour.’

I found in it the suit of clothes which I had when I came into the count’s service, but I looked in vain for that which the Messenian had ordered to be made for me. My master had not thought proper to leave it with me, or else somebody had made free with it during my delirium. All my other baggage remained, and even a great leathern purse that contained my money, which I reckoned twice, as I could not, at first, believe that there were but fifty pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty that were in it before I fell sick. “What is the meaning of this, my good mother!” said

I to the nurse: 'my finances are terribly diminished.' 'And yet nobody, except myself, has touched them,' said the old woman; 'and I have been as frugal as possible: but sickness is very expensive; one is always laying out. Here,' added the good mother, taking a packet of paper out of her pocket; 'here is an account of the expense, as just as the current coin, which will show that I have not employed a maravedi amiss.'

I glanced over the bill, which contained fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy upon me! what a quantity of poultry had been bought, while I was out of my senses. There was in broths only to the amount of twelve pistoles at least. The other articles were answerable to this. It cannot be imagined how much was laid out for wood, candles, water, and brooms. Nevertheless, swelled as this account was, the sum total did not exceed thirty pistoles, consequently there ought to be a remainder of one hundred and eighty. This I represented to her: but the beldame, with an air of devotion, began to take all the saints to witness, that there were but fourscore pistoles in the purse when the count's butler gave her the charge of my portmanteau. 'What is that you say, goody?' cried I with precipitation: 'was it the butler who put my things into your hands?' — 'Without doubt it was he,' she replied, 'by this token, that when he gave
me

‘me them. he said — “Good mother, when
“Signior Gil Blas is stiff, don’t fail to treat
“him with a good funeral, for there is mo-
“ney enough in the portmanteau to answer
“the expence.”

‘Ah, damned Neapolitan!’ cried I, ‘I am
‘no longer at a loss to know how my mo-
‘ney is gone: you have swept it away, to
‘make yourself some amends for the thefts
‘I hindered you to commit.’ After this
apostrophe, I thanked Heaven that the
knave had not carried off the whole. What-
ever reason I had, however, to accuse the
butler of having robbed me, I could not
help thinking that the nurse might, possibly,
have done the deed. My suspicion fell some-
times on one, sometimes on the other;
but it was still the same thing to me.

I said nothing to the old woman: I did
not even cavil at the articles of her un-
conscionable bill; for I should have got
nothing by wrangling, and every one must
understand his trade; my resentment, the-
refore, was contented with paying and dis-
missing her three days after.

I believe, when she went from me, she
advertised the apothecary that she had been
dismissed, and that I was well enough to
decamp without taking my leave of him;
for, in a moment after, he came to me,
quite out of breath, and presented his bill;
in which, under names that were utterly

unknown to me, although I had been a physician, he had set down all the pretended medicines with which he had furnished me while I was out of my senses. This bill might be justly said to have been written in the true spirit of an apothecary; and accordingly we disputed about the payment of it. I insisted on his abating one half of the sum he demanded; he swore he would not abate one maravedi. Considering, however, that he had to do with a young man who might give him the slip, by quitting Madrid that very day, he chose rather to be contented with what I offered, that is, three times the value of his drugs, than to run the risk of losing the whole. I gave him the money with infinite regret, and he retired fully revenged for the small disgrace he had suffered on the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost at the same time; for those animals are always at the tail of one another. I paid him for his visits, which had been very numerous, and sent him away very well satisfied: but before he would leave me, in order to prove that he had earned his fees, he related all the mortal symptoms, which he had prevented, in my distemper; a task he performed in very learned terms, and with an agreeable air, though it was altogether above my comprehension. When I had dispatched him, I thought I had got rid of all the ministers of the Fates; but I was mistaken, a

surgeon, whom I had never seen, entered my apartment, and having saluted me very respectfully, expressed great joy in seeing me out of danger; a deliverance which, he said, he attributed to two copious bleedings that he had performed, and some cupping-glasses which he had the honour to apply. This was another feather to be plucked from my wing: I was fain to pay tribute to the surgeon also. After so many evacuations, my purse became so feeble, that it was little better than a lifeless corps, so little of the radical moisture remained.

I began to lose courage, when I saw myself relapsing into a state of misery. I had, while I served my last masters, conceived too great affection for the conveniences of life, and could no longer, as formerly, look upon indigence with the eye of a Cynic philosopher. I will own, however, that I was very much in the wrong, to let myself fall a prey to melancholy. After having so often experienced that fortune no sooner overthrew me than she raised me up again, I ought to have regarded the troublesome situation in which I was, as another introduction to prosperity.

*B O O K VIII.**CHAP. I.*

Gil Blas contracts a good Acquaintance, and obtains a Post that consoles him for Count Galiano's Ingratitude. The History of Don Valerio De Luna.

My not having heard of Nunnez all this time surprized me so much, that I concluded he must be in the country; and as soon as I could walk, I went to his lodgings, where I understood that he had actually gone to Andalusia, three weeks before, with the Duke de Medina Sidonia. One morning, at waking, Don Melchior de la Ronda came into my head; and remembering that I had promised to him, while I was at Granada, to visit his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, I resolved to keep my promise that very day. Having got a direction to the house of Don Balthazar de Zuniga, I repaired thither, and asked for Signior Joseph Navarro, who soon appeared. When I saluted him, he received me politely, but coldly, although I had signified my name. I did not know how to reconcile this frozen reception with the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going away, with a resolution to save myself the trouble of a second visit, when,

all of a sudden, assuming an open, smiling air, he cried, with a good deal of emotion : — ‘Ah, Signior Gil Blas de Santillane! pray ‘pardon the reception I have given you. My ‘memory had betrayed my inclination: I ‘had forgot your name, and little thought ‘that you was the cavalier of whom mention ‘is made in a letter which I received from Granada about four months ago.

‘How rejoiced am I to see you!’ added he, throwing his arms about my neck, with transport; ‘my uncle Melchior, whom I ‘love and honour as a father, conjures me ‘if perchance I should have the honour of ‘seeing you, to treat you in the same manner as if you was his son, and to employ, ‘if there should be occasion, my own credit, and that of my friends, in your behalf. ‘He has praised the qualities of your head ‘and heart, in such terms as would have interested me in your favour, even if I had ‘not been engaged thereto by his recommendation. I beg, therefore, that you will ‘look upon me as a man to whom my uncle ‘has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments ‘with regard to you. I offer you my friendship, and I hope you will not refuse me ‘yours.’

I answered with that gratitude which I owed to the polite behaviour of Joseph; and like people of warmth and sincerity, we contracted an intimacy on the spot; and

I did not scruple to disclose the situation of my affairs; which he no sooner heard, than he said — ‘I undertake to procure a place for you; and, in the mean time, don’t fail to come and dine with me every day. You will fare better here than at your eating house.’ The offer was too agreeable to a poor creature just come out of a fit of illness, who had been used to good living, to be rejected. I accepted the invitation, therefore, and recruited so well in that family, that in fifteen days I had the face of a Bernardine monk. Melchior’s nephew seemed to make up his pack rarely; but how could it be otherwise! He had three strings to his bow; was, at the same time, butler, steward, and clerk of the kitchen; besides, (our friendship apart) I believe the controller of the house and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly recovered when my friend Joseph, seeing me come in one day to dine as usual, made up to me with a gay air, and said — ‘Signior Gil Blas, I have a pretty good place in view for you. You must know that the Duke of Lerma, prime-minister of the Spanish crown, in order to devote himself entirely to affairs of state, intrusts two persons with his own concerns. Don Diego de Montefar has the care of gathering his rents; and his household expense is managed by Don Rodrigo de Calderona. These two men, in whom he can

‘confide, exercise their employments with
‘absolute authority, without the least de-
‘pendence on one another. Don Diego
‘usually keeps in his service two stewards
‘to receive his cash; and as I understood this
‘morning that he had dismissed one of them,
‘I have been to ask the place for you.
‘Signior de Montefier, who knows me, and
‘of whose friendship I may boast, has granted
‘it without any difficulty, on my recom-
‘mendation of your morals and capacity.
‘We will go to his house this afternoon.’

We went thither accordingly. I was very graciously received, and installed in the employment of the steward who had been dismissed. His office consisted in visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents; in a word, I was concerned in the country estate, and every month gave in my accounts to Don Diego, who examined them with great attention. This was what I wished. Although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was resolved to continue always in the same path.

One day, having got notice that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than half of it had been reduced to ashes, I went thither immediately, to take an account of the damage; and having informed myself exactly, upon the spot, of all the circumstances of the fire, I composed

an ample relation of it, which Montefes shewed to the Duke of Lerma. This minister, notwithstanding the affliction he was in to hear such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author: Don Diego not only satisfied him in that particular, but also spoke so much in my favour, that his excellency remembered me six months after, on the occasion of a story which I am going to recount, and without which, perhaps, I should never have been employed at court. Here it is.

At that time, there lived in the street of the Infantas, an old lady called Inesilla de Cantarilla, whose birth was not certainly known. Some said that she was the daughter of a lute-maker; and others, that her father was a commander of the order of St. Jago. Be that as it will, she was a prodigy. Nature had bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming the male sex during the whole course of her life, which exceeded seventy-five years. She had been idolized by the noblemen of the old court, and saw herself adored by those of the new. Time, that spares not even beauty, had exerted itself upon her in vain; though it had withered it, it could not deprive her of the power to please: a noble air, an enchanting wit, and graces that were peculiar to her, made her inspire the men with passion, even in her old age.

One of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, called Don Valerio de Luna, a cavalier of five-and-twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared himself in the most passionate terms, and pursued his prey with all the fury that love and youth can inspire. The lady, who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, did not know how to moderate his flame. One day, however, thinking she had found the means, she carried the young man into her closet, and pointing to a clock that stood upon the table — 'You see, said she, 'what hour it is — on the same day and hour did I come 'into the world, seventy-five years ago; and 'do you really think it becomes one of my 'age to be engaged in love intrigues? Recal 'your reason, my child; and stifle those sentiments which are so unsuitable both to 'you and me.' At this sensible advice, the cavalier, who no longer acknowledged the authority of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed by the most violent emotions — 'Cruel Inesilla! 'why have you recourse to such frivolous 'remonstrances? Do you imagine that they 'can change you in my eyes? Don't flatter 'yourself with such a vain hope. While you 'are such as I behold you, or while my view 'is fascinated by the charm, I cannot cease to love you.' — 'Well then,' said she, 'since 'you are so obstinate as to persist in the resolution of fatiguing me with your address.

‘ses, my house shall be no longer open to
‘you. I forbid you to come near it, and
‘desire to see you no more.

You will, perhaps, believe, after this, that Don Valerio, disconcerted at what he had heard, made an honourable retreat. On the contrary, he became still more importunate. Love produces the same effects in its votaries, as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged, sighed, and making a sudden transition from entreaties to rage, attempted to enjoy by force, what he could not otherwise obtain. But the lady, resisting with courage, cried, with an air of indignation: — ‘Hold, rash wretch! I will
‘soon bridle your impious ardour. Know
‘that you are my son.’ Don Valerio was confounded at these words, which suspended the violence of his passion. But, imagining that Inesilla spoke thus only to be rid of his solicitations, he answered — ‘You have invented that fable to elude my desires.’ — ‘No, no,’ said she, interrupting him; ‘I reveal a mystery, which I should always have concealed, had not you reduced me to the necessity of disclosing it. Six-and-twenty
‘years ago, I was in love with Don Pedro
‘de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia; and you became the fruit
‘of our mutual passion. He owned you for
‘his son, gave you good education; and
‘although he had not been without other
‘children, your good qualities would have

‘determined him to leave you a fortune. I,
‘for my part, did not forsake you. As soon
‘as you began to appear in the world, I al-
‘lured you to my house, in order to inspire
‘you with that polite behaviour which is so
‘necessary to a gallant man, and which wo-
‘men only can bestow. I did more; I em-
‘ployed all my credit to introduce you into
‘the prime-minister’s service. In short, I
‘have interested myself for you, as I ought
‘to do for a son. After this declaration, take
‘your own measures. If you can purify
‘your sentiments, and look upon me only
‘as a mother, I do not banish you from my
‘sight, but will treat you with all the tender-
‘ness I have hitherto preserved; but if you
‘are incapable of that effort, which both na-
‘ture and reason demand, fly this moment,
‘and deliver me from the horror of your
‘presence.’

While Inesilla spoke in this manner, Don Valerio remained in a profound silence. He seemed to recall his virtue, and endeavour to vanquish himself; and he meditated another design, and prepared a quite different spectacle for his mother. Being unable to console himself for the unsurmountable obstacle that opposed his wishes, he basely yielded to his despair; he drew his sword, and plunged it in his own bosom; punishing himself like another Oedipus, with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes, out of grief for having

committed the crime: whereas the Castilian stabbed himself, because he could not commit it.

The unhappy Don Valerio did not die immediately of the blow he had given himself; but had time to repent, and asked pardon of Heaven for having taken away his own life. As he left, by his death, a vacancy in the post of secretary to the Duke of Lerma, that minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, nor the good character he had heard of me, chose me to fill the place of this young gentleman.

CHAP. II.

Gil Blas is presented to the Duke of Lerma, who receives him into the number of his Secretaries; sets him to Work, and is satisfied with his Performances.

Monteser was the person who informed me of this agreeable news, and laid — ‘Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, I love you too well not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You will not fail to make a fine fortune, provided you follow two pieces of advice which I have to give you. The first is, to appear so much attached to his excellency, that he shall never doubt of your being entirely devoted to his will.

‘And the second is, to make your court to
‘Signior Don Rodrigo de Calderona; for
‘that man moulds the mind of his master
‘like wax. If you have the good fortune to
‘acquire the good-will of that favourite se-
cretary, you will go a great way in a very
‘little time.’

‘Signior,’ said I to Don Diego, after
‘having thanked him for his good advice,
‘tell me, if you please, Don Rodrigo’s cha-
‘racter. I have often heard him spoken of,
‘and represented bad enough; but I have
‘not much confidence in the pictures which
‘people draw of those who have posts at
‘court; though sometimes, I believe, they
‘do not judge amiss. Pray, tell me then,
‘what do you think of Signior Calderona?’
— ‘You ask me a very delicate question,’
replied the overseer, with a satirical smile.
‘I would tell any body but you, without
‘hesitation, that he is a very honourable
‘gentleman, of an unblemished character:
‘but I will deal more frankly with you; for,
‘besides that I believe you a young man of
‘discretion, I think it my duty to talk openly
‘to you of Don Rodrigo, since I have ad-
‘vised you to cultivate him with care: other-
‘wise, I should only oblige you by halves.

‘You must know then, that from a
‘simple domestic of his excellency, when he
‘was only Don Francis de Sandoval, this
‘man has arrived, by degrees, at the post of

his first secretary. There never was a prouder man ; he looks upon himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague ; and, at bottom, he may be said to share with him the authority of prime-minister ; since he bestows posts and governments on whom he pleases to oblige. This the publik often murmurs at ; but he gives himself no trouble about the matter : provided an affair yields him a handsome present, he bids defiance to censure. You will easily conceive, from what I have said,' added Don Diego, 'how you are to behave to such a haughty mortal.' — 'O yes,' said I ; 'leave that to me ; it will be very unlucky, indeed, if I cannot gain his favour. — When one knows the foible of a person whom he wishes to please, he must be no conjurer if he fails of success.' — 'Well then,' replied Montefier, 'I will now present you to the Duke of Lerma.'

We went immediately to the house of that minister, whom we found giving audience in a great hall, where there was more company than at court. Here I saw commanders, and knights of Calatrava and St. Jago, soliciting for governments and vice-royalties ; bishops, who, being sickly at their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops, only for the change of air ; and, some holy fathers, of the order of St. Dominick and St. Francis, who laid claim to the mitre with great humility. I likewise observed some

half-pay officers, who acted the same part that Captain Chinchilia had formerly done; that is, spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension. If the duke did not gratify all their desires, he at least received their petitions with great affability; and I perceived that he answered very politely to those who spoke to him.

We waited patiently until he had dispatched all these suppliants; then Don Diego said to him — ‘My lord, here is Gil Blas de Santillane, that young man whom your excellency has chosen to supply the place of Don Valerio.’ At these words the duke, casting his eyes upon me, said in a very obliging manner, that I had already merited it by the services I had done him. He afterwards carried me into his closet, to discourse with me in private, or rather to judge of my understanding by my conversation. He desired to know who I was, and the life I had hitherto led, exacting of me a sincere narration of the whole. What a detail was this for me to give! there was no thinking of telling lies before a prime-minister of Spain. On the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve on a general confession. How should I extricate myself from this embarrassment! I took the resolution of embellishing the truth in those parts where it would have offended in its nakedness; but he did not fail to discover

it in spite of all my skill. 'Monsieur de Santillane,' said he, with a smile, when I had finished my story, 'I see you have been in your time a little upon the picare.*') I answered with a blush — 'Your excellency ordered me to be sincere, and I have obeyed.' — 'I am obliged to thee for it,' he replied: 'go, my child; thou hast come off very cheaply. I am astonished that thou wast not undone by ill example. There are many honest people who would have turned great rogues, had Fortune put them to the same trials.'

'Friend Santillane,' continued the minister, 'forget thy past life, and remember that thou now belongest to the king, in whose service thou wilt be employed for the future. Follow me, and I will make thee acquainted with the nature of thy office.' He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his own, where I saw, upon shelves, twenty thick registers in folio. 'It is here,' said he, 'where thou must work. These registers compose a dictionary of all the noble families within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarch. Every book contains, in alphabetical order, the abridged history of every gentleman: in which are recounted the services which he and his ancestors have performed to the state, as well as to the affairs of honour in which

*') A Spanish word, signifying rogue.

‘which they have been engaged. There is
‘also mention made of their fortune, mo-
‘rals, and, in a word, of all their bad qua-
‘lities; so that when they come to solicit
‘favours at court, I see, with one glance of
‘my eye, whether or not they deserve them.
‘That I may have an exact information of
‘all these things, I have pensionaries every
‘where, who take care to get good intelli-
‘gence, which they transmit to me in wri-
‘ting: but, as their memorials are often dif-
‘fuse, and stuffed with provincial modes of
‘expression, they must be rendered more
‘concise, and the diction polished; because
‘his majesty sometimes orders these registers
‘to be read to him. In this work, which
‘requires a perspicuous style, I will employ
‘thee this very moment.’

So saying, he took out of a portfolio full of papers, a memorial, which he put into my hand; and went out of the closet, leaving me at liberty to perform my *coup d'essai*. I read the piece, which seemed not only stuffed with barbarous terms, but even filled with indecent passion, though it had been composed by a monk in the town of Solsona. He there tore to pieces, without mercy, a good Catalonian family; and God knows if he spoke truth: it looked so much like a scandalous libel, that I at first made some scruple of working upon it, being afraid of making myself an accomplice in the calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I

was at court, I went on, at the hazard of his reverence's soul; and, placing all the iniquity, if there was any in the case, to his account, began to dishonour, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of honest men perhaps.

I had already finished four or five pages, when the duke, impatient to know how I performed, returned, and said — ‘Santilane, show me what thou hast done; for I long to see it.’ At the same time, throwing his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning with great attention; and, seemed so well satisfied, that I was surprized at his commendations. ‘Prepossessed as I was in thy favour, said he, ‘I confess thou hast surpassed my expectation; thou writest not only with all the clearness and distinction that I desired, but thy style is also spirited and easy; thou justifiest the choice I have made of thy pen, and consolest me for the loss of thy predecessor.’ He would not have confined my eulogium to this, had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his nephew the Count de Lemos, whom his excellency embraced several times, and received in such a manner as gave me to understand that he loved him with a tender affection. They shut themselves up together, to talk in private of a family affair, which I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel, and with which the minister, at that time,

seemed to be more engrossed than with the business of the king.

While they were engaged together, I heard the clock strike twelve; and, as I knew that the secretaries and clerks quitted their offices at that hour, to go and dine somewhere, I left my performance, and went out, not with a view of going to Montefier's house, for he had already paid my appointments, and I had taken my leave of him, but to the most famous ordinary at the court-end of the town; a common eating-house would not now serve my turn. Remember that thou now belongest to the king. These words, which the duke had pronounced, were seeds of ambition that every instant sprung up in my soul.

CHAP. III.

He learns that his Post is not altogether without Mortifications. His Uneasiness at this Piece of News, which obliges him to alter his Conduct.

I was at great pains, when I entered, to let the landlord know that I was secretary to the prime-minister; and, in that quality, I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid of bespeaking something that might savour of parsimony, and therefore bade him dress what he himself should think

proper. Accordingly, he regaled me in a sumptuous manner, and I was served with marks of respect which gave me still more pleasure than the good cheer. When the bill was brought, I threw a pistole upon the table, leaving to the waiters one fourth of it at least; for so much remained over and above the reckoning. After which I strutted away with such gestures as showed that I was mighty well pleased with my own person.

About twenty yards from hence, there was a large house, in which noblemen that were strangers commonly lodged. Here I hired an apartment, consisting of five or six rooms handsomely furnished, as if I already enjoyed two or three thousand ducats a year; and even paid the first month per advance. Afterwards, returning to work, I spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. There were two more secretaries in a closet next to mine; but they only transcribed what the duke gave them to copy. With these I contracted an acquaintance that very evening, when we went out together; and, in order to gain their friendship the sooner, carried them to my tavern, where I ordered for supper the best dishes in season, with the most delicate wines.

We sat down together, and began to converse with more gaiety than wit; for to do

justice to my guests, I soon perceived that they did not owe to their genius the places which they possessed. They were connoisseurs, indeed, in the different kinds of hand-writing; but, they had not the least tincture of university education.

To make amends for this, they understood their own little interest to admiration; and were not so much intoxicated with the honour of serving the prime-minister, but that they complained of their situation. 'We have,' said one of them, 'already exercised our employment five months at our own expense, without touching one farthing; and, which, is worse, our appointments are not regulated, nor do we know upon what footing we are.' — 'As for my part,' said the other, 'I would, with all my heart, put up with twenty stripes, instead of appointments, to be allowed the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for I dare not retire of my own accord, nor demand my dismissal, after the secrets with which I have been intrusted; else I might chance to visit the tower of Segovia, or castle of Alicant.'

'How do you make shift to live then?' said I to them: 'I suppose you have fortunes of your own.' They answered they had very little money; but, luckily for them, they lodged at the house of an honest widow, who gave them credit for their board, at

the rate of one hundred pistoles a year from each. All this discourse, of which I did not lose one word, dissipated in an instant the fumes of my pride: I concluded, that no more consideration would be paid to me than to others; consequently, I had no cause to be so much charmed with my post, which was not quite so substantial as I had imagined; and that, in short, I could not be too frugal of my purse. Those reflections cured me of my extravagance, I began to repent of having invited my fellow-secretaries, wished the repast at an end; and, when the bill was brought, disputed with the landlord on every article.

My friends and I parted at midnight, because I did not press them to stay longer. They went home to their widow, and I to my superb apartment, which I now was mad with myself for having hired, and which I firmly resolved to leave at the month's end. It was to no purpose to me to lie down on a good bed; my anxiety banished all repose; and I passed the night in contriving means of being paid by his majesty for my work. I stuck, on this occasion, to Montefier's advice, and rose with a resolution of going to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderona. I was in a very proper disposition to appear before such a proud man, because I found I had occasion for his protection.

I repaired then to the secretary, whose lodging communicated with that of the

Duke of Lerma, and even equalled it in magnificence; by the furniture, it would have been a difficult matter to distinguish the master from the man. I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio; but, for all that, I waited in the antichamber upwards of an hour. 'Mr. New Secretary,' said I to myself at this juncture, 'have a little patience, if you please: I find you must dance attendance yourself, before you make other people do so.' The chamber-door being opened at length, I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who, having just finished a billet-doux to his charming Sirena, was putting it into Pedrillo's hands. I had never appeared before the Archbishop of Granada, the Count Galiano, nor even the prime-minister, so respectfully as I presented myself to the eyes of Signior de Calderona, whom I saluted with a bow to the very ground, begging his protection in such submissive terms, that I cannot remember them without a blush. My meanness would have turned to my prejudice in the opinion of a real gentleman: but he was pleased with my groveling behaviour, and assured me, obligingly enough, that he would let slip no opportunity of doing me service.

I thanked him with great demonstrations of zeal for his favourable sentiments of me; and having vowed an eternal attachment to him, took my leave for fear of

incommoding him, and begged he would excuse me, if I had interrupted him in his important affairs. As soon as I had acted this mean part, I went to my office, where I finished the task which had been imposed. The duke, who did not fail to come thither in the morning, was no less pleased with the end than he had been with the beginning of my work, and said — ‘This is extremely well: write as well as thou canst this abridged history in the register of Catalonia; after which thou shalt take another information out of the port-folio, and manage it in the same manner.’ I had a pretty long conversation with his excellency, and was charmed with his sweetness and familiarity of behaviour. What a difference was there between him and Calderona! They were two figures strongly contrasted.

I dined that day in an eating-house for a moderate expense; and resolved to go thither incognito every evening, until I should see the effect of my complaisance and servility. I had money sufficient to maintain me three months, during which I resolved to work at a venture; purposing, as the shortest follies are the least prejudicial, to abandon the court, and all its tinsel, if I should receive no salary before the expiration of that term. This, therefore, was my plan: I spared nothing, during two months, to please Calderona; but he took so little notice of my endeavours, that,

despairing of success, I changed my conduct towards him, and exerted myself wholly in profiting by those moments of conversation which I had with the duke.

CHAP. IV.

Gil Blas gains the Favour of the Duke de Lerma, who intrusts him with a Secret of great Importance.

Although his grace, to use the expression, only just appeared before me, and vanished again, every day, I insensibly rendered myself so agreeable to his excellency, that he said to me one afternoon — ‘Hark’e, Gil Blas; I like thy disposition and understanding, and have a regard for thee accordingly. Thou art a zealous, faithful young fellow, extremely intelligent and discreet; so that I don’t think I shall misplace my confidence, if I bestow it upon thee.’ I threw myself on my knees when I heard these words; and, after having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me up, answered — ‘Is it possible, then, that your excellency can deign to honour me with such extraordinary favour? What secret enemies will your goodness raise up against me? But there is only one man whose hatred I dread, and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderona.’

‘Thou hast nothing to apprehend from that quarter,’ replied the duke. ‘I know Calderona; he has been attached to me from his infancy; and, I may venture to say, his sentiments are so conformable to mine, that he cares for those whom I love, and hates those who disoblige me: instead of dreading his aversion, thou mayest on the contrary, depend upon his friendship.’ By this, I could plainly perceive, that Signior Don Rodrigo was a cunning rogue, who had got possession of his excellency’s soul; and that I could not be too cautious with him. ‘To begin,’ added the duke, ‘with putting thee in possession of my confidence, I will disclose to thee a design which I have projected; for it is necessary that thou shouldst be informed of it, that thou mayest acquit thyself the better of the commissions in which I intend to employ thee. I have a long time beheld my authority, in general, respected, my decisions blindly followed, and commissions, employments, governments, vice-royalties, and benefices disposed of according to my wish. I may be said to reign in Spain; and it is impossible to push my fortune farther; but I would secure it against the storms that begin to threaten me; and, for that effect, want to have my nephew, the Count de Lemos, for my successor in the ministry.’

Here the duke, observing that I was extremely surprised at what I heard, said —

‘I see your surprize, Santillane; you think
‘it very strange that I should prefer my ne-
‘phew to my own son, the Duke d’Uzeda;
‘but you must know that this last has too
‘narrow a genius to fill my place: besides,
‘I am his enemy; he has found the secret of
‘being agreeable to the king, who wants to
‘make him his favourite, and this is what
‘I cannot bear. The favour of a sovereign
‘is like the possession of a woman whom
‘we adore; a piece of happiness, of which
‘we are so jealous, that we cannot resolve
‘to share it with a rival, however connected
‘to us by the ties of blood and friendship.

‘I now disclose to thee,’ continued his
grace, ‘the very bottom of my soul. I have
‘already attempted to ruin the Duke d’Uzeda
‘with his majesty; and, as I could not suc-
‘ceed, I have changed my battery. I de-
‘sign that the Count de Lemos shall insinuate
‘himself into the good graces of the Prince
‘of Spain. Being gentleman of his bed
‘chamber, he has an opportunity of talking
‘with him every moment; and, besides
‘that, he does not want wit, I know a sure
‘method for him to succeed in that enter-
‘prize. By this stratagem, I will oppose my
‘nephew to my son, and breed a division
‘between two cousins, which will oblige
‘them both to court my support, the awe
‘of which will keep them submissive to my
‘will. This,’ added he, ‘is my scheme; and

‘thy assistance will be very serviceable to
 ‘me; for I will always send thee to
 ‘the Count de Lemos, and thou shalt report
 ‘from him whatever he shall have occasion
 ‘to impart.’

After this confidence, which I regarded
 as ready money, I no longer felt any disquiet.
 ‘At length,’ said I to myself, ‘I am under
 ‘the spout; a shower of gold will certainly
 ‘rain upon me; for it is impossible but that
 ‘the confidant of a man, who, by way of
 ‘excellence, is called the great pillar of the
 ‘Spanish monarchy, should be, in a very
 ‘short time, loaded with wealth!’ Full of
 such agreeable hope, I saw with indifference
 my poor purse giving up the ghost.

CHAP. V.

*Gil Blas is overwhelmed with Joy, Honour,
 and Distress.*

The minister’s affection for me was
 soon perceived; for he affected to give
 marks of it in public, giving me the charge
 of his port-folio, which he used to carry in
 his own hand to council. This novelty,
 making people look upon me as a small fa-
 vourite, excited the envy of several persons,
 and was the occasion of my receiving a great
 deal of court holy-water. My two neigh-
 bours, the secretaries, were not the last in

complimenting me upon my approaching greatness; and they invited me to sup at their widow's, not so much in return for my treat, as with a view to engage me in their behalf for the future. I was welcomed every where; even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behaviour to me, and now called me nothing but Signior de Santillane; though, before that, he only favoured me with You, always omitting the term Signior. He loaded me with civilities, especially when he thought our patron might observe him: but I assure you he had no fool to deal with; I answered all his kindness with equal politeness; and the more so, the more I hated him in my heart: an old courtier could not have excelled me in this particular.

I likewise accompanied my lord duke to court, whither he commonly went three times a day. In the morning he entered his majesty's bed-chamber as soon as he was awake; and, kneeling by the bed-side, discoursed of those things that were to be done in the day; having also dictated to his master what was to be said, he retired; and returned immediately after dinner, not to talk on state affairs, but to converse on entertaining subjects, and regale the king with all the merry adventures which happened in Madrid, and of which he was always very early informed. Last of all, he visited him, for the third time, in the evening,

when he gave such an account as he thought proper of what he had done through the day, and, in a careless manner, asked his majesty's orders for to-morrow. While he was with the king, I remained in the antichamber, where I saw people of quality, devoted to the idol Favour, court my conversation, and think themselves happy if I entered into discourse with them. How, after this, could I help thinking myself a man of consequence! There are a great many at court who have the same opinion of themselves, upon a much more slender foundation.

One day, I had still more food for my vanity. The king, to whom the duke had spoken very advantageously of my style, was very curious to see a specimen of it. Upon which his excellency made me take up the Catalonian register, and, carrying me into the presence, ordered me to read the first story which I had abridged. If I was at first disturbed by the presence of the prince, I was soon composed by that of the minister; and read my performance, which his Majesty heard with pleasure. He expressed his satisfaction, and even recommended me to the minister's protection. This did not at all diminish the pride of my heart; and the conversation which I had, a few days after, with the Count de Lemos, quite filled my head with the ideas of ambition. I went to this nobleman from his uncle; and, find-

ing him at the prince's court, presented to him a letter of credentials; in which the duke told him, that he might open himself to me, as to one who was perfectly well acquainted with their design, and chosen by him as their common messenger. The count having read this billet, conducted me into a room; and, having locked the door, spoke in this manner — 'Since you enjoy the confidence of the Duke of Lerma, I don't doubt that you deserve it, and I ought to make no difficulty in giving you mine also. You must know, then, that matters go on swimmingly. The prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and who study to please him. I had this morning a private conversation with him, in which he seemed chagrined at seeing himself, through the king's avarice, unable to follow the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend like a prince. On this occasion, I did not fail to lament his situation; and, profiting by the opportunity, promised to bring a thousand pistoles to him at the levee to-morrow, as an earnest of greater sums, which I have undertaken to furnish him with in a very little time. He was charmed with my promise; and I am certain of captivating his favour, if I keep my word. Go, and tell these circumstances to my uncle, and return in the evening to inform me of his sentiments of the matter.'

I quitted the Count de Lemos immediately, and went back to the Duke of Lerma; who, on my report, sent to Calderona for a thousand pistoles, which he gave me to carry in the evening to the count. This I performed, saying to myself — ‘Oho! I now see plainly what the infallible method is which the minister takes to succeed in his enterprize: upon my soul, he is in the right! and to all appearance, these prodigalities will not ruin his fortune: I can easily guess from whose coffers these pistoles are taken; but, after all, it is but reasonable that the father should maintain the son.’ The Count de Lemos, when we parted, said softly — ‘Farewel, my confidant! the Prince of Spain is a little amorous: you and I must have a conference on that subject one of these days. I foresee that I shall have occasion for your dexterity very soon.’ I came home musing on these words, which were not at all ambiguous, and which filled me with joy. ‘The devil!’ said I; ‘I am just on the eve of becoming Mercury to the heir of the kingdom.’ I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office; the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great prince! ‘Softly, Mr. Gil Blas,’ some folks will say, ‘the business was only to make you deputy-minister.’ I own it: but at bottom the honour of both these posts is equal; the difference lies in the profits only. While

While I executed these noble commissions, advancing every day farther and farther in the good graces of the prime-minister, with such enchanting hopes, how happy should I have been if ambition had secured me from the cravings of hunger! More than two months had elapsed since I had quitted my magnificent apartment, and hired a small chamber very frugally furnished. Although this gave me some pain, yet, as I came out early in the morning, and did not go home to bed before night, I bore my fortune patiently. The whole day I appeared upon my theatre, that is, in the Duke's house, and played the part of a man of consequence; but, when I crept up into my garret, my importance vanished, and nothing remained but poor Gil Blas without money, and, which is worse, without any thing that could fetch it. Though I had not been too proud to discover my necessity to any body, I did not know one person that could assist me, except Navarro, whom I had neglected so much, since I turned courtier, that I had not assurance enough to make application to his friendship. I had been obliged to sell all my clothes piece-meal, except those for which I had absolute occasion. I went no more to the eating-house, because I had not wherewithal to pay my ordinary. How did I make shift then to subsist? Every morning, a little bread and wine was brought into our offices for breakfast. this

was all that the minister allowed; this was all that I eat through the day; and I generally went supperless to bed.

Such was the situation of a man who shone at court, and who was more properly an object of compassion than envy. Nevertheless, I could no longer sustain the weight of my misery; and at length determined to disclose it, with address, to the Duke of Lerma, as soon as an opportunity should offer. Happily for me, I found an occasion at the Escorial, *) whither the king and the prince repaired, some days after I had come to this resolution.

*) Escorial a royal palace of the King of Spain in New Castile, about twenty-two miles from Madrid. It was begun in 1557, by Philip II. son of the Emperor Charles V. after the victory which his army obtained over the French at St. Quintin, and finished in twenty-two years, at an immense expense. It stands in a dry, barren country, almost surrounded with mountains, but wants nothing to render it a complete town, having fifteen thousand windows, twenty two courts, and seventeen cloysters or piazzas, besides a church, college, monastery, dwelling-houses, shops, artificers &c. It has forty chapels; the high altar in one of which, from the ground to the roof, consists of the most beautiful jasper. This chapel is said to have cost upwards of five millions. The pantheon, where the royal family of Spain are interred, is in the above-mentioned chapel, and is a very curious and rich structure; it was begun by Charles V. carried on by kings Philip II and III. and completed by Philip IV. From the Escorial is an elegant prospect of Madrid.

CHAP. VI.

The Manner in which Gil Blas informs the Duke of Lerma of his Necessity, and that Minister's Behaviour on the Occasion.

While the king was at the Escorial, he defrayed the expense of every body; so that there I did not feel where the shoe pinched: I lay in a wardrobe, just by the bed-chamber of the duke; who, one morning rising as usual at break of day, made me take some papers and a standish, and follow him into the palace garden. We went and sat down under a tuft of trees, where I put myself, by his order, in the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; while he held in his hand a paper which he pretended to read; so that, at a distance, we seemed busy in very serious affairs, though all the while we talked of nothing but trifles.

For the space of an hour, I had diverted his excellency with all the sallies that my good humour could afford, when two magpies, perching on the trees under which we sat, began to chatter in such a noisy manner, as attracted our attention. 'These birds,' said the duke, seem to scold one another: I should be very glad to know the cause of their quarrel.' — 'My lord,' said I, your curiosity puts me in mind of

‘an Indian fable, which I have read in Pilpay, or some other author of that kind.’ — The minister desired to hear it, and I recounted it in these words —

‘Heretofore a good monarch reigned in Persia, whose genius being not quite extensive enough to govern his kingdom of himself, he left that care to his Grand Vizir, Atalmuc; a man of superior capacity, who supported the weight of that vast monarchy without stooping, and maintained it in profound peace. He had even the art of making the royal authority loved, as well as feared; and the subjects enjoyed an affectionate father in a vizir who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had, among his secretaries, a young Cachemirian, called Zeangir, whom he loved more than all the others. He took pleasure in his conversation, carried him in his company to the chace, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day while they hunted together in a wood, the vizir seeing two ravens croaking on a tree, said to his secretary — “I wish I knew what these birds are talking of in their language.” — “Signior,” answered the Cachemirian, “your wish may be accomplished.” — “How can that be?” replied Atalmuc. “A cabalistical dervise,” said Zeangir, “taught me the language of birds. If you please I will listen to these, and repeat to you, verbatim, every thing that I shall hear.”

“The vizir consented; and the Cachemirian approaching the ravens, seemed to lend an attentive ear to their discourse. After which, returning to his master—“Signior,” said he, “would you believe it? we are the subject of their conversation.” — “Impossible!” cried the Persian minister; “what can they say of us?” — “One of them,” replied the secretary, said — “Behold the Grand Vizir Atalmuc in person, that tutelary eagle, who covers Persia like a nest with his wings, and incessantly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his painful toils, he hunts in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy is that secretary in serving a master who has so much affection for him!” — “Softly,” said the other raven, “softly! don’t too much extol the happiness of that Cachemirian. Atalmuc, it is true, converses familiarly with him, honours him with his confidence, and, I doubt not, intends to give him a considerable post: but, before that happens, Zeangir will die of hunger. That poor devil lodges in a small paltry room, where he is in want of the common necessities of life. In a word, he lives in a miserable manner, though nobody at court perceives it. The grand vizir never thinks of enquiring into his circumstances; but, content with entertaining favourable sentiments in his behalf, leaves him, in the mean time, a prey to poverty.”

Here I left off speaking, in order to observe the duke; who asked with a smile, what impression the apologue made on the mind of Atalmuc, and if the grand vizir was not affronted at the presumption of his secretary. 'No, my lord,' said I, in great confusion at his question; the fable says, 'that, on the contrary, he loaded him with favours.' — 'That was lucky,' replied the duke, with a serious air; 'some ministers would not like to be so schooled. But,' added he, breaking off the discourse, and getting up, 'I believe the king will soon be awake, and my duty obliges me to be near him.' So saying, he walked hastily towards the palace, without speaking another word, and very ill pleased, as I imagined, with the Indian fable.

I followed him to the very door of his Majesty's bedchamber; after which, I went and put the papers into the place from whence I had taken them, and then entered the closet where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they were also along with the court. 'What is the matter with you, Signior de Santillane?' said they, when they saw me; 'you seem very much disturbed! Has any disagreeable accident happened to you?'

I was too much affected with the bad success of my apologue to conceal my grief, I recounted to them what I had said to the

duke; and they expressed their sympathy in the sharp affliction with which I was seized. 'You have great reason to be 'grieved,' said one of them; 'I wish you may 'be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinola; who, tired with having received nothing during fifteen months, in 'which he was employed by his eminence, 'took the liberty, one day, of representing 'his necessity, and craving some money for 'his subsistence. "It is but just," said the minister, "that you should be paid. Here," added he, giving him an order for a thousand ducats; "go and receive that sum from "the royal treasury; but remember, at the 'same time, that I have no farther occasion "for your service." The secretary would 'have consoled himself for his dismissal, 'had he touched his thousand ducats, and 'been allowed to seek for business elsewhere; 'but, just as he went out of the cardinal's 'house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and 'conducted to the tower of Segovia, where 'he has been prisoner a long time."

This touch of history redoubled my fear; I believed myself undone; and becoming inconsolable, began to reproach my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. 'Alas!' said I, why did I risk 'that unlucky fable which has displeased the 'minister? perhaps he was just on the point 'of extricating me out of my miserable situation: nay, perhaps, I was on the eve of

‘making one of those sudden fortunes which
‘astonish mankind. What riches! what ho-
‘nours have I lost by my own folly! I ought
‘to have considered that great men don’t
‘chuse to be anticipated, but desire that the
‘least gratifications they are obliged to give
‘should be received as their own free grace
‘and favour. It would have been better for
‘me to continue my slender regimen, with-
‘out complaining to the duke, and even to
‘let myself die of hunger, by which means
‘the blame would have laid on his side.’

If I had even preserved some sparks of hope, my master, whom I saw in the afternoon, would have banished them entirely; he was very serious with me, contrary to custom, and scarce spoke at all; a circumstance that threw me into mortal disquiet for the rest of the day: neither did I pass the night in more tranquillity; my sorrow for seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the dread of increasing the number of state-prisoners, made me groan and lament my condition till morning.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The duke ordered me to be called in the morning, and I entered his chamber, trembling like a criminal who is going to receive sentence. ‘Santillane,’ said he, showing a paper which he held in his hand, ‘take this order.’ I quaked at the word order, saying to myself, ‘O Heaven! be-

‘hold Cardinal Spinola! the carriage is ready
‘for Segovia!’ The terror which seized me
was such, that I interrupted the minister,
and throwing myself at his feet — ‘My
‘lord,’ said I, all in tears, ‘I most humbly
‘beg that your excellency will pardon my pre-
‘sumption: it was necessity alone that com-
‘pelled me to disclose my situation!’

The duke, who could not help laugh-
ing at my disorder, answered — ‘Be com-
‘forted, Gil Blas’, and listen to what I am
‘going to say: Although the discovering thy
‘necessities was a reproach to me for not
‘having prevented them, I am not at all
‘disobliged, my friend; I am rather angry
‘with myself for having omitted to ask how
‘thou livest. But, to begin making amends
‘for this inattention, I give this order for
‘fifteen hundred ducats, which will be paid,
‘upon sight, out of the royal treasury. This
‘is not all: I promise thee the same sum an-
‘nually; and besides, when people of wealth
‘and generosity solicit thy interest, I do not
‘forbid thee to speak in their behalf.’

In the extasy occasioned by these words,
I kissed the feet of the minister, who having
commanded me to rise, continued to dis-
course with me in a familiar manner. I at-
tempted to recall my good-humour, but I
could not make such a sudden transition
from grief to joy. I was as much con-
founded as a wretch who is informed of

his pardon, in the very minute when he expected his execution. My master ascribed all this agitation to the fear of having incurred his displeasure, though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no less a share in my discomposure. He confessed, that he had affected coolness towards me, to see whether or not I should be afflicted at the change; that, from this, he was convinced of my sincere attachment to his person, for which he loved me the more.

CHAP. VII.

The good Use to which he put his fifteen hundred Ducats; the first Affair in which he intermeddled, and the Profit from thence accruing.

The king, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience, returned the very next day to Madrid, upon which I flew instantly to the royal treasury, where I immediately touched the sum contained in my order. I now listened to nothing but my vanity and ambition: I abandoned my miserable room to those secretaries who are still ignorant of the language of birds, and once more hired my fine apartment, which was luckily untenanted. I sent for a famous taylor, who worked for almost all the beaux; he took my measure, and carried me to a

shop where he took off five ells of cloth, which, he said, was barely sufficient to make a suit for me. Five ells for a suit in the Spanish taste! Just Heaven! But let us spare our censure; taylors of reputation always use more than others. I then bought some linen, which I wanted very much, silk stockings, and a beaver, laced with point d'Elpagne. This being done, I thought it would not look well for me to be without a lackey, and desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to accommodate me with one of his own recommendation. Most of the strangers who lodged with him used, on their arrival at Madrid, to take Spanish valets into their service, by which means his house was the rendezvous of all the lackeys out of place. The first that presented himself was a young fellow of such a soft, devout appearance, that I would have nothing to do with him: he looked too much like Ambrose de Lamela. 'I don't want,' said I to Forero, 'a valet of such a religious deportment; I have been already bit by such another.' Scarce had I dismissed this lackey, when another came in of a very sprightly appearance, as impudent as a court page, with something roguish in his looks. Pleased with his outlide, I put some questions to him, which he answered with spirit. I observed that he was of an intriguing disposition, and looking upon him as a subject pat for my purpose, engaged him

immediately. I had no cause to repent of my choice; nay, I perceived, in a very little time, that I had made an admirable acquisition. As the duke had permitted me to speak to him in favour of people whom I wanted to serve, (and I was resolved not to neglect this permission) I had occasion for a jackall to discover the game; that is, an industrious pleasant fellow, proper to find out and allure those who had favours to ask of the prime-minister. This office was quite the master-piece of Scipio, (such was my lackey's name) who had been in the service of Donna Anna de Guevara, nurse to the Prince of Spain, where he had exercised that talent to some purpose.

As soon as he understood my credit, and that I should be glad to use it to the best advantage, he went to work, and that very day said to me — ‘Signior, I have made
‘a pretty good discovery: a young gentleman
‘of Granada, called Don Roger de Rada, is
‘come to Madrid on an affair of honour,
‘which obliges him to solicit the Duke of
‘Lerma’s protection, and he is willing to
‘pay well for the favour he shall obtain; I
‘have already spoken with him, and found
‘him desirous of applying to Don Rodrigo
‘de Calderona, whose power he had heard
‘greatly extolled; but I have changed his
‘intention, by assuring him that Calderona
‘sells his good offices at an extravagant rate;

‘whereas, you content yourself with a moderate gratification for yours, and that you would even employ them gratis, were you in a situation that permitted you to follow your generous and disinterested inclination; in short, I spoke to him in such a manner, as that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning.’ — How! said I, ‘Mr. Scipio, you have already done a great deal of work. I perceive that you are no novice in matters of intrigue; and am surprised that you have not made your fortune. — ‘That ought not to surprise you,’ he replied; ‘I love to make money circulate, and never hoard up what I get.’

Don Roger de Rada actually came to my lodgings, and I received him with politeness mixed with pride. ‘Signior Cavalier,’ said I, ‘before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honour that brings you to court; for it may be of such a nature, that I dare not speak to the prime-minister in your behalf: make, therefore, if you please, a faithful report of it, and be assured that I will enter warmly into your interests, provided a man of honour may espouse them.’ — ‘With all my heart,’ replied the young Granadine; ‘I will sincerely recount my story.’ At the same time he related it as follows.

CHAP. VIII.

The History of Don Roger de Rada.

Don Anastasio de Rada, a Granadine gentleman, lived happily in the town of Antequera, with Donna Estephania his wife, who, together with unblemished virtue, possessed a gentle disposition, and a great share of beauty. If she had a tender affection for her husband, he was also distractedly fond of her, and being naturally addicted to jealousy, (though he had not the least cause to suspect her fidelity) was not without disquiet. He was afraid that some secret enemy of his repose made attempts upon his honour. — He distrusted all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who had free access to his house, in quality of Estephania's cousin, and who, indeed, was the only man he ought to have suspected.

Don Huberto actually fell in love with his kinswoman, and had presumption enough to declare his passion, without regard to ties of blood, or the particular friendship subsisting between him and Anastasio. The lady, being a woman of discretion, instead of making a discovery, which might have been attended with melancholy consequences, reprimanded her relation with gentleness, represented to him how much he was to blame, in attempting

‘to seduce her, and dishonour her husband:
‘and told him, very seriously, that he must
‘not flatter himself with the hope of suc-
‘cess.

‘This moderation served only to inflame
‘the cavalier the more; and, imagining that
‘he must push things to extremity, with a
‘woman of her character, he began to be-
‘have very disrespectfully to her, and one
‘day had the audacity to press her to satisfy
‘his desire. She repulsed him with an air
‘of severity, and threatened to make Don
‘Anastasio punish his rashness. The gallant,
‘terrified at this menace, promised to speak
‘no more of his passion; and, on the faith
‘of that promise, Estephania pardoned what
‘was past.

‘Don Huberto, who was naturally a
‘very wicked man, could not behold his
‘love so ill repaid, without conceiving a
‘base desire of being revenged. He knew the
‘jealous temper of Anastasio to be susceptible
‘of any impression which he had a mind to
‘give: and he needed no more than this in-
‘telligence to form the blackest design that
‘ever entered into the heart of a villain.

‘One evening, while he and this weak
‘husband were talking together by them-
‘selves, he said to him, with a melancholy
‘air. — “My dear friend, I can no longer
‘live without revealing to you a secret,
‘which I would have kept for ever from

“your knowledge, were not your honour
“dearer to you than your repose; but your
“delicacy and mine, in point of injuries,
“permits me not to conceal what passes at
“your house; prepare to hear a piece of
“news, which will give you as much sorrow
“as surprize, for I must touch you in the
“tenderest part.”

“I understand you,” said Don Anastasio, already discomposed; “your cousin is
“unfaithful!” — “I no longer own her for
“my cousin,” replied Hordales, with an
“air of indignation: “I renounce her; for
“she is unworthy of such an husband.” —
“It is too much to make me languish in this
“manner,” cried Don Anastasio, “speak:
“what has Estephania done?” — “She has
“betrayed you,” answered Huberto; “you
“have a rival, whom she entertains in pri-
“vate; but I know not his name; for the
“adulterer, by the favour of a dark night,
“concealed his person from those who ob-
“served his retreat. All I know is, that
“you are deceived; that I am certain of.
“The concern which I ought to have in this
“affair, but too well verifies my report.
“Since I declare myself against Estephania, I
“must be well convinced of her infidelity.

“It is in vain,” added he, observing
“that his discourse had the desired effect, “it
“is in vain for me to tell you more. I per-
“ceive that you don’t deserve the ingratitude
with

“with which your love is repaid; and that
“you meditate just vengeance on the
“guilty. I will not oppose your design.
“Never examine who the victim is that you
“intend to strike; but show to the whole ci-
“ty, that there is nothing which you can-
“not sacrifice to your honour.”

“The traitor thus animated a too credu-
“lous husband against an innocent wife, and
“painted, in such lively colours, the infamy
“with which he would be covered, if he
“should leave the injury unpunished, that he
“grew mad with revenge. Don Anastasio,
“having lost his judgment, seemed actuated
“by the furies, and went home with a reso-
“lution to stab his unhappy wife, who was
“just going to bed when he came in. He
“constrained himself at first, and waited un-
“til the servants were withdrawn; then,
“unrestricted by the fear of Heaven’s wrath,
“by the dishonour he was going to reflect
“upon his family, and even by the natural
“pity which he ought to have felt for an in-
“fant, which his wife had already carried six
“months in her womb, he approached the
“victim, saying, in a furious tone — “Thou
“must die, wretch! thou hast but a mo-
“ment to live, and that my generosity al-
“lows thee, to spend in a prayer to Heaven,
“to pardon the outrage thou hast commit-
“ted against me; for I would not have thee
“lose thy soul, as thou hast lost thy honour.”
“So saying, he unsheathed his poinard. His

“action and discourse terrified Estephania, who falling at his feet, and clasping her hands, said to him, in the utmost astonishment — “What is the matter, Signior! “what cause of discontent have I been so unhappy as to give you? why would you take away the life of your spouse? If you suspect her of infidelity, indeed you are mistaken!”

“No, no!” the jealous husband hastily replied: “I am but too well assured of your falsehood: those who informed me are credible persons. Don Huberto” — “Ah, Signior!” said she, interrupting him with precipitation, “you have reason to distrust Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine; if he has said any thing to the prejudice of my virtue, do not believe him.” — “Peace, infamous woman!” answered Don Anastasio; “by endeavouring to prejudice me against Hordales, you justify, instead of dissipating, my suspicions. You endeavour to render that relation suspected, because he is informed of your misconduct: you want to invalidate his testimony; but that artifice is in vain, and redoubles my desire of punishing your guilt.” — “My dear husband!” resumed the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly, distrust your own blind rage: if you follow its emotions, you will commit an action which it will not be in your power to atone, when once you are convinced of your injustice. In the name of

“God, quiet your transports! at least, give
“yourself time to clear up your suspicions,
“and do justice to a wife who has no crime
“to reproach herself with.”

“Any other than Anastasio would have
“been moved with these words, and still
“more with the affliction of her who pronun-
“ced them; but he, cruel man! far from
“being melted at her distrels, once more
“bade the lady recommend herself quickly to
“God, and even lifted up his arm to strike.
“Hold, barbarian!” cried she: “if thy love
“for me is entirely extinguished; if the
“marks of tenderness which I have lavished
“upon thee are effaced from thy remem-
“brance; if my tears cannot divert thee
“from thy execrable design: at least, have
“some regard to thy own blood. Arm not
“thy frantic hand against an innocent who
“has not yet seen the light: thou canst not
“be its executioner without offending Hea-
“ven and earth. As for my part I forgive
“thee my death; but, be assured, the blood
“of the babe will cry for vengeance upon
“such a horrible deed!”

“Howsoever determined Don Anastasio
“was to pay no attention to what Estephania
“might say, he could not help being moved
“by these dreadful images which her last
“words presented to his thoughts. Where-
“fore, as if he had been afraid that his emo-
“tions would betray his resentment, he ha-
“stened to take advantage of the fury that re-

‘mained in his heart, and plunged his poni-
‘ard into the right side of his wife, quitted
‘his house immediately, and fled from An-
‘tequera.

‘Meanwhile, the unfortunate lady’ was
‘so stunned with the blow which she had re-
‘ceived, that she lay some minutes on the
‘floor, without any signs of life: afterwards,
‘recovering her spirits, she uttered such
‘plaints and lamentations as brought an old
‘maid servant into the room. As soon as
‘this good woman saw her mistress in such
‘a piteous condition, she awaked the rest of
‘the domestics, and even the neighbours,
‘with her cries. The chamber was soon fill-
‘ed with people; surgeons were called;
‘they examined the wound, and had good
‘hopes of her recovery. They were not mis-
‘taken in their conjectures; for, in a little
‘time, they cured Estephania, who was hap-
‘pily delivered, three months after this cruel
‘adventure, of a son (Signior Gil Blas)
‘whom you now see. I am the fruit of that
‘melancholy pregnancy.

‘Although scandal seldom spares a wo-
‘man’s virtue, it respected that of my mo-
‘ther; and, this bloody scene was looked
‘upon in town as the groundless transport of
‘a jealous husband. My father, it is true,
‘was known to be a violent man, very apt
‘to take umbrage without cause. Hordales
‘concluded, that his kinswoman suspected
‘him of having disturbed the mind of Don

‘Anastasio with false stories; and satisfied
‘with being, at least, half revenged, left off
‘visiting her. Not to tire you, Sir, I will
‘not enlarge upon the particulars of my edu-
‘cation; but only observe that my mother’s
‘principal care was to have me taught to
‘fence; and I accordingly learned that exer-
‘cise, a long time, in the most celebrated
‘schools of Grenada and Seville. She wait-
‘ed, with impatience, until I was old
‘enough to measure my sword with that of
‘Don Huberto, before she informed me of
‘the cause she had to complain of him:
‘then, I being in my eighteenth year, she
‘imparted to me the whole story; not with-
‘out shedding tears in abundance, and ap-
‘pearing affected with the most violent sor-
‘row. What impression must a mother, in
‘that condition, make on a son, who nei-
‘ther wanted courage nor sentiment! I went
‘instantly and challenged Hordales to a pri-
‘vate place, where, after a pretty obstinate
‘combat, I ran him through the body in
‘three different places, and left him breath-
‘less on the spot.

‘Don Huberto, finding himself mortal-
‘ly wounded, fixed his last looks upon me,
‘and said, he received the death I had given
‘him as a just punishment for the crime he
‘had committed against the honour of my
‘mother. He confessed, that he had resol-
‘ved upon her destruction, to be revenged
‘of her scorn; and expired, asking pardon

‘of Heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and
‘me. I did not think proper to return, in
‘order to inform my mother of what had
‘happened: I left that to Fame, and, pass-
‘ing the mountains, repaired to Malaga,
‘where I embarked with the captain of a
‘privateer, just ready to sail on a cruize. He
‘thought I did not look like one who want-
‘ed courage, and gladly consented that I
‘should join his volunteers.

‘We soon found an opportunity of signali-
‘zing ourselves. Near the illand of Albou-
‘ran, *) we met a corsair of Mellila, on her
‘return to the coast of Africa, with a Spa-
‘nish ship richly laden, which she had taken
‘off Carthagera. **) We vigorously attacked
‘the African, and made ourselves masters of
‘both ships, in which we found fourscore
‘Christians, whom they were carrying as sla-
‘ves to Barbary. Then, taking advantage of
‘a favourable wind that sprung up for the
‘coast of Grenada, we arrived, in a little
‘time, at Punta de Helena.

‘While we asked the slaves, whom we
‘had delivered, the places of their nativity,
‘I put that question to a man of good mien,
‘who seemed to be about fifty years of age.

*) Albouran, a small island in the Mediterranean, on the coast of the kingdom of Fez. Mellila is a little city in the same part of Barbary.

**) Carthagera or New Carthage, an ancient city in the kingdom of Murcia, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

“He answered, with a sigh, that he was
“from Antequera. I felt a strong emotion
“at his reply, without knowing wherefore;
“and he perceiving it, was remarkably dis-
“turbed in his turn. “I am,” said I, “your
“townsman: may I ask the name of your
“family?” — “Alas!” he replied, “you re-
“new my grief, by desiring me to gratify
“your curiosity. Eighteen years ago I quit-
“ted Antequera, where I cannot be remem-
“bered without horror; you yourself may,
“perhaps, have heard of me but too often;
“my name is Don Anastasio de Rada.” —
“Just Heaven!” cried I, can I believe my
“senses? What! is this Don Anastasio, my
“own father, whom I see!” — “What is
“that you say, young man?” cried he in
“his turn, looking at me with surprize;
“is it possible that you are the unhappy in-
“fant which was in its mother’s womb when
“I sacrificed her to my fury?” — “Yes, my
“father,” said I; “I am he whom the vir-
“tuous Estephania brought into the world,
“three months after that fatal night on
“which you left her weltering in her blood.”

“Don Anastasio, before I had finished
“these words, fell upon my neck, clasped
“me in his arms, and, for a whole quarter
“of an hour, we did nothing but mingle
“our sighs and tears. After having yield-
“ed to those tender emotions that such a
“meeting could not fail to raise, my father
“lifted up his eyes, and thanked Heaven

‘for having preserved the life of Estephania.
‘But a moment after, as if he had been
‘afraid of giving thanks unseasonably, he
‘asked in what manner the innocence of
‘his wife had been proved? “Signior,” said
‘I, nobody but you ever doubted it; her
‘conduct was always irreproachable. I will
‘disabuse you; you must know that you was
‘imposed upon by Don Huberto.” I then
‘recounted the whole of that relation’s per-
‘fidy, the vengeance I had taken, and the
‘confession he made at his death. My father
‘was not so much pleased with the recovery
‘of his freedom, as with the news I told. In
‘the excess of his joy he began to embrace
‘me again with tenderness and transport;
‘and could not help expressing his satisfac-
‘tion with regard to my conduct. “Come,
‘“my son,” said he, “let us hasten to Ante-
‘“quera. I burn with impatience to throw
‘“myself at the feet of a wife whom I have
‘“so unworthily treated. Since you have
‘“made me acquainted with my own inju-
‘“stice, my heart is torn with remorse!”

‘I was too eager to bring together per-
‘sons who were so dear to me, to retard the
‘happy moment: I quitted the privateer;
‘and, with my share of the prize we had ta-
‘ken, bought two mules at Adra, my father
‘being unwilling to expose himself again to
‘the dangers of the sea. He had leisure
‘enough on the road to relate his adventu-
‘res, which I heard with as greedy attention

‘as that which the Prince of Ithaca paid to
‘those of the king his father. In short, after
‘having travelled several days, we gained
‘the foot of a mountain, in the neighbour-
‘hood of Antequera, where we halted; and,
‘resolving to go home privately, did not en-
‘ter the town till midnight.

‘I leave you to guess the surprize of my
‘mother at the return of a husband whom
‘she thought for ever lost: and the miracu-
‘lous manner (if I may be allowed the ex-
‘pression) in which he was restored, be-
‘came another cause for her astonishment.
‘He asked pardon for his barbarity, with
‘such genuine marks of repentance, that she
‘could not help being affected with them;
‘and, instead of regarding him as an assas-
‘sin, looked upon him as a man whom
‘Heaven had subjected to her will; so sacred
‘is the name of husband to a virtuous wo-
‘man!

‘Estephania had been so anxious on my
‘account, that she was overjoyed at my re-
‘turn. But her pleasure was not without
‘allay; the sister of Hordales had begun a
‘criminal process against the murderer of
‘her brother, and caused me to be searched
‘for every where in such a manner, that
‘my mother, knowing how insecure I was
‘at home, suffered an uneasiness, which
‘obliged me to set out that very night for
‘court; where I come, Signior, to solicit

‘my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since
‘you design to speak to the prime-minister
‘in my behalf, and to support me with your
‘whole credit.’

The valiant son of Don Anastasio here finished his narration; upon which I said to him, with an air of importance — ‘Enough, Signior Don Roger; the case is pardonable: I undertake to communicate your affair to his excellency, and I will venture to promise you his protection.’ The Grenadine, upon this assurance, launched out into a world of thanks, which would have entered at one ear and gone out at the other, had he not assured me, that whatever service I should do him, would be close followed by his acknowledgments. As soon as he touched on that string, I put myself in motion, and that very day recounted his story to the duke: who, having permitted me to introduce the cavalier, said to him — ‘Don Roger, I am informed of the affair that brought you to court: Santillane has told me every circumstance; make yourself easy; you have done nothing that is not excusable; and it is particularly to those gentlemen who revenge their injured honour that his majesty loves to show favour. For the sake of form, you must go to prison: but be assured, you shall not continue in it long. Your friend Santillane will take care of the rest, and soon procure your enlargement.’

Don Roger made a profound bow to the minister, on whose word he surrendered himself. His pardon, by my care, was expedited in a very little time; for, in less than ten days, I sent this new Telemachus home to his Ulysses and Penelope; whereas, had he been without a protector, he would not, perhaps, have been quit for a whole year's imprisonment. I touched no more than an hundred pistoles for my good offices; so that it was not a great catch. But I was not yet a Calderona, to despise small matters.

CHAP. IX.

Gil Blas finds Means to make a considerable Fortune in a short Time, and gives himself great Airs accordingly.

This affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the Great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense, had enriched himself by books of knight-errantry. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats

he obtained, through my means, a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the minister, properly speaking, had no business with this affair, his excellency, at my request, was so good as to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two thirds of the loading belonged to a merchant of Lisbon, who having reclaimed it in vain, came to court in quest of a patron, who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles, for my protection.

Methinks, I hear the reader cry in this place — ‘Bravo, Monsieur de Santillane, ‘put hay into your boots; you are in a fine ‘road; push your fortune!’ Oh! that I will, I warrant you! I see, if I am not mistaken, my valet coming with a new prize which he has grappled. Right: it is Scipio—let us hear him. ‘Signior,’ said he, ‘allow me to ‘introduce this famous operator to you. He ‘wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclu- ‘sive of all others, during the space of ten ‘years, in all the cities under the dominion ‘of Spain; that is, all persons of his profes- ‘sion shall be prohibited from settling in the

‘place or places where he resides; and he
‘will pay, as an acknowledgment, two hun-
‘dred pistoles to any person who will pro-
‘cure for him the said privilege.’ I said to the
mountebank, assuming the patron, ‘Well,
‘friend, your business shall be done.’ Sure
enough, in a very few days, I dispatched
him with patents, which entitled him to
cheat the people exclusively, through all
the kingdom of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had ob-
tained of his excellency the four favours I
had asked so easily, that I did not hesitate to
request a fifth; which was the government
of the city of Vera, on the confines of Gra-
nada, for a knight of Calatrava, *) who pro-
mised me a thousand pistoles for the place.
The minister laughed to see me so hot on
the game: ‘Egad, Gil Blas,’ said he, ‘you
‘go on at a rare rate, you must be furiously
‘inclined to oblige your neighbours. Hark’e,
‘I shall not stand upon trifles with you: but
‘when you demand governments, and other
‘considerable favours, you shall, if you
‘please, be contented with one half of the
‘profit, and be accountable for the other to
‘me. You can’t imagine,’ added he, ‘what
‘expense I am obliged to be at, or how

*) A military order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in
the year 1158, during the reign of Sancho III. King
of Castile. The habit of the order is a large white
mantle, with a red cross on the left side, powdered
with flowers de luce.

‘many resources I must have to support the
‘dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the
‘disinterested appearance I assume, I confess
‘I am not imprudent enough to disorder my
‘domestic affairs. Take your measures ac-
‘cordingly.’

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those who wanted favours at court, should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera, for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another, at the same price, for a knight of St. Jago.*) I was not contented with making governors only; I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent. I was also willing, that the clergy should feel my benevolence: I bestowed small benefices, canonships, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishoprics and archbishoprics, they were all in the gift of Don

*) St. Jago, or St. James. This is the highest order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the twelfth century. They bear for arms a sword gules, the handle is in form of a cross powdered with flowers de luce; and their motto is, *Sanguine Arabum.*

Rodrigo de Calderona, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders, and viceroys. A plain proof, that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts, of which we made such an honourable traffic, were not always the best qualified, or most regular. We knew very well, that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expence; but we resembled those misers, who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates had reason to call intemperance and folly, the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of the prime-minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner; bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation, and now wanted to get rid of it by the advice of his baker. I engaged a coachman; and, as it was but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple honour of my valet de chamber, secretary, and steward: but what put the finishing stroke to my pride was, the minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgment that remained; and I became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro; who, when

they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and well nigh believed myself the Duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it in my head, that I should pass for such, or, perhaps, for one of his bastards: a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose, I ordered Scipio to look out for a skilful cook; and he found one, who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanos *) of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines; and, after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening, some of the principal clerks of the minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side (for it was like master like man), kept table also in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintances at my expense: but, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides,

*) An epicure. that lived in the Augustan age, and eat up a vast fortune.

sides, I looked upon this profusion like a young man, and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason also for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grist to the mill; and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had for once driven a nail into the wheel of Fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my vanity, but to make Fabricius an eye-witness of my pomp. I did not doubt, that he was returned from Andalusia; and, that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing, that a Sicilian nobleman of his acquaintance expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nunnez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him to supper. 'Yes, friend,' said I to him, 'this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides.'— 'Is it possible,' cried he, with great vivacity, 'that I find thee again in such opulence! how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galia-
'no! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless,' added he, 'followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy con-

‘duct; for it is by such prudent measures
‘only, that the stewards in great families be-
‘come so rich.’

I let Fabricius applaud himself as much as he pleased, for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano; after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service; but, perceiving that my poet, while I made the detail, sung his recantation within himself, I said to him — ‘I forgive the Sicilian: be-
‘tween you and me, I have more cause to
‘rejoice, than be sorry at his behaviour to-
‘wards me. If the count had not used me
‘ill, I should have followed him to Sicily,
‘where I should now have been a servant,
‘in expectation of an uncertain establish-
‘ment. In a word, I should not be confi-
‘dant to the Duke of Lerma.’ Nunnez was so struck with these last words, that he continued some minutes incapable of uttering one syllable. Then breaking silence all of a sudden, ‘Did I understand you aright?’
‘said he, ‘what! have you the confidence of
‘the prime-minister?’ — ‘I share it,’ I re-
plied, ‘with Don Rodrigo de Calderona;
‘and, it all appearance, I shall make great
‘progress. — ‘Truly, Signior de Santillane,’
said he, ‘I look upon you with admiration?
‘you are capable of filling all sorts of em-

‘ploysments. What talents you are master
‘of! you have, (to use the expression of our
‘tennis-court) the universal tool; that is to
‘say, you are qualified for every thing. Fi-
‘nally, Signior,’ added he, ‘I am overjoyed
‘at your worship’s prosperity.’

‘O the devil!’ said I, interrupting him,
‘Mr. Nunnez, truce with Signior and your
‘worship; let us banish these terms, and
‘live familiarly together.’ — ‘Thou art in
‘the right,’ he replied; I ought not to look
‘upon thee otherwise than as usual, although
‘thou art become rich. I will confess my
‘weakness; I was dazzled when I understood
‘thy happy fate: but that prejudice is over,
‘and I now behold thee again as my old
‘friend Gil Blas.’

Our conversation was interrupted by the
arrival of four or five clerks. ‘Gentlemen,’
said I to them, presenting Nunnez, ‘you
‘shall sup with Signior Don Fabricio, who
‘composes verses worthy of King Numa;*)
‘and writes in prose like a prodigy.’ Un-
‘luckily I spoke to people who regarded poe-
‘try so little, that our author suffered on
‘account of his profession. Scarce would
‘they deign to favour him with a look. It
‘was to no purpose that he said witty

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*) The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests, in their
processions, were composed by Numa.

‘things, in order to attract their attention :
‘they did not perceive the beauty of his sal-
‘lies; and he was so much piqued at their
‘want of taste, that he made use of his poe-
‘tical licence, and, cunningly withdrawing
from the company, disappeared. Our clerks
did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to
table without so much as asking what was
become of him.

Just as I had done dressing, next morn-
ing, and was going abroad, the poet of
Asturias entered my chamber, saying — ‘I
‘ask pardon, my friend, for having so
‘abruptly left thy clerks last night; but tru-
‘ly, I was so much out of my element
‘among them, that I could no longer en-
‘dure my situation. A parcel of insolent fel-
‘lows, with their self-sufficient starched airs!
‘I can’t comprehend how thou, who hast
‘an acuteness of understanding, canst ac-
‘commodate thyself to such stupid guests!
‘This very day,’ added he, ‘I will bring hi-
‘ther fellows of wit and spirit.’ — ‘I shall be
‘obliged to thee,’ answered I; ‘and will en-
‘tirely depend upon thy taste in the choice
‘of them.’ — ‘Thou art in the right, said
‘he, ‘I promise thee superior geniuses, of
‘the most entertaining characters. I will go
‘this instant to a coffee-house where they
‘meet, and bespeak them before they engage
‘themselves elsewhere; for, happy is the man
‘who can have their company at dinner or

‘supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humour.’

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me one after another, characterising each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that these wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works, as he said, deserved to be engraven in letters of gold. I received these gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vain-glorious. Though I had not laid my injunctions on Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee; my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed, that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a tittle less arrogant. In the middle of supper they worried me with verse and prose; each in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writing: one regaled me with a sonnet; another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read

a criticism upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavouring in his turn to give us an ode of Anacreon translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation denied his assertion; and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives: the debate still continued; until, becoming quite furious, they got up, and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lackies, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which, when we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public-house, without making the least apology for their unpolite behaviour.

Nunnez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. 'Well, friend,' said I to him, 'will you still extol your fellow guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither a villainous set! I will henceforth keep to my clerks: don't talk to me of authors.' — 'I will bring no more such,' answered he; thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe.'

CHAP. X.

The Morals of Gil Blas are entirely corrupted at Court. He is charged with a Commission by the Count de Lemos, and engages in an Intrigue with that Nobleman.

As soon as I was known to be in favour with the Duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning my antichamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my levee. Two kinds of company came thither; one to buy my interest with the minister for favours; and the other to move me by supplications to obtain for them what they wanted, gratis. The first was sure of being heard and assisted; but, with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long, that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint; of consequence, I cured myself of my friendships also, and stripped myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behaviour to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and, after having express-

ed a great deal of friendship for me, as he always did when we met, desired me to ask of the Duke of Lerma, a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me, that the cavalier, in whose behalf he solicited, was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence.' I don't at all doubt,' added Joseph, 'that kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honour in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity.' This was plainly telling me he expected it for nothing; and, though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to do what he desired. 'I am charmed,' answered I to Navarro, 'that I have it in my power to show my lively gratitude for all the favours which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for any one, is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon for him, depend upon it: the affair is now no longer yours, but mine.'

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured it for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats,

which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgment I might have expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said, with an air of mortification, when next we met — ‘Ah, my dear Navarro! ‘you was too late in speaking to ‘me; I was prevented by Calderona, who ‘has given away that same post; and I am ‘quite in despair that I have no better news ‘to entertain you with.’

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever; but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For, besides my being burdened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman, whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him the thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more, by order of the duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day. He told me that he had at last gained his end, and entirely possessed the good graces of the Prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was. He then gave me charge

of a very honourable commission which he had already prepared for me. 'Friend Santillane,' said he, 'now is the time to be doing; spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who should be worthy to amuse that gallant prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me.' I promised to neglect nothing in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people lived by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of enquiry; but not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private — 'Child, I am going to intrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know, that, in the midst of Fortune's favours I find I want something?' — 'I can easily guess what that is,' said he, interrupting me before I could proceed; 'you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and exhilarate your spirits; and truly it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave gray beards cannot dispense with such recreation.' — 'I admire thy penetration,' answered I, with a smile. 'Yes; a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I

‘must warn thee before hand, that I am very delicate in these matters. I expect a lady of beauty and good morals.’ — ‘What you require,’ replied Scipio, ‘is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair.’

Sure enough, in three days, he said — ‘I have discovered a treasure; a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honourable manner on their fortune, which is but small; they are served by a chambermaid of my acquaintance, who has assured me, that though their door is shut to every body at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing, to avoid scandal, by going in at night without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier who desired to find the door unlatched; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place.’ — ‘That’s well,’ I replied; ‘but I am afraid the chambermaid imposes upon thee.’ — ‘No, no,’ said he; ‘I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interrogated the neighbours, and conclude, from what they say, that

‘Signora Catalina is a Danae on whom you may descend, like another Jupiter in a shower of gold.’ Prejudiced as I was, against intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once; and as the chamber-maid came next day, and told Scipio, that, if I pleased, I might be introduced that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither between eleven and twelve. The maid received me in the dark, took me by the hand, and led me into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches. As soon as they perceived me, they got up, and saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took them for persons of quality. The aunt, (whose name was Signora Mencia) though still agreeable, did not attract my attention, which was entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a goddess. To examine her minutely, however, she could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had such graces, together with a tempting luscious air, as hindered the eye to perceive her defects.

Accordingly I was disturbed at sight of her. I forgot that I came thither to perform the office of procurer: spoke in my own favour, and expressed myself like a man inspired by the most violent passion. The young lady, in whom I fancied three times more wit than she really had, (so courteous did she seem) quite enchanted

me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner — ‘Signior de Santillane, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I have heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favour by standing on ceremony; but don’t imagine yourself the nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are, (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate.’

This well-aimed shot frightened away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed, made me recollect myself. I became all of a sudden the faithful agent of the Count de Lemos, and, changing my tone, replied to Signiora Mencia — ‘Madam, I am pleased with your frankness, which I intend to imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain.’ — ‘Your refusal of my niece,’ re-

plied the aunt, coldly, 'was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of raillery.' — 'I don't rally, indeed, Madam,' cried I; nothing 'is more serious; I have orders to find out 'a lady who deserves to be honoured with 'the private visits of the Prince of Spain: I 'find such a one in your house, and mark it 'for the scene accordingly.'

Signiora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner — 'If I was disposed to credit 'literally what you say, you must know that 'I am not of such a character as to rejoice in 'the infamous honour of seeing my niece 'mistress to a prince. My virtue disapproves' — 'What a saint you are, with your 'virtue!' said I, interrupting her; 'you talk 'like one bred among silly citizens. Sure 'you joke, in pretending to consider things 'in a moral point of view! that would be 'stripping them of all their beauty; they 'must be surveyed with a carnal 'eye. Behold the heir-apparent of Spain, at the feet of the happy Catalina, a doring and 'loading her with presents; and remember, 'that from her perhaps will spring a hero 'who will render his mother's name immortal a his own.'

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself

irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the prince already in her chains, affected great indifference; so that I was obliged to invest the place anew, until at length, Signiora Mencia, seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the chamade, and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles. Imprimis, If the prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina's charms, shall be inflamed, and determine to honour her with a nocturnal visit, I shall take care to apprize the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose. Item, The prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury in chief.

After this convention, the aunt and niece showed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behaviour, in consequence of which I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and, when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the couriers of gallantry, and the women who want their service. Had people observed me to leave this house with such marks of favour, they might have said, with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The

Count de Lemos was overjoyed when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He told the ladies he did not at all doubt, that the prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress whom I had chosen for him, and that she, on her part, would have cause to be contented with such a lover; that the young prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper: in short, he assured them, that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendance. This nobleman, afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage, in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he set me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new-started adventure, and to desire he would send him a thousand pistoles to ensure its success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed, concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio, but took to myself the honour of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. ‘Mr. Gil Blas,’ said the minister to me with an air of raillery, ‘I am ravished to find, that, with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties: when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you.’ — ‘My lord,’ I replied in the same tone, ‘I thank your grace for intending me the preference; but, give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous in serving your excellency in that manner. Signior Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it.’ The duke smiled at my answer, then changing the discourse, asked, if his nephew did not want money for this adventure. ‘Pardon me,’ said I, ‘he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles.’ — ‘Very well,’ replied the minister, carry them to him, bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the prince shall propose.’

CHAP. XI.

The private Visit and Presents which the Prince of Spain made to Catalina.

I went that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who told me — ‘You could not come in better

‘season. I have spoken to the prince: he has
‘bit at the hook, and burns with impatience
‘to see Catalina. This very night he in-
‘tends to slip privately out of the palace, in
‘order to visit her. It is a thing determi-
‘ned, and our measures are taken according-
‘ly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and
‘give them that money which you have
‘brought; for it is right to let them see that
‘he is no ordinary lover whom they are to
‘receive; besides, the bounty of princes
‘ought to precede their intrigues. As you
‘will accompany him, together with me,’
added he, ‘be sure of being at his couchée
‘this evening. Your coach also (for I think
‘it is proper we should use it) must wait
‘for us near the palace about midnight.’

I immediately repaired to the house, but
did not see Catalina, who they told me was
abed; so that I could only speak with Sig-
niora Mencia, to whom I said, ‘Madam,
‘pray excuse me for appearing in your house
‘by day; but it is not in my power to do
‘otherwise, for I must give you notice that
‘the Prince of Spain will be here this night:
‘and here,’ added I, putting the bag of mo-
ney in her hand, ‘is an offering which he
‘sends to the temple of Cytherea, to render
‘the divinities of the place propitious.
‘You see I have not engaged you in a bad
‘affair.’ — ‘I am very much obliged to you,’
she replied; ‘but tell me, Signior de Santil-

lane, does the prince love music?' — 'He loves it,' answered I, 'to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delicately touched.' — 'So much the better!' cried she, in a transport; 'you give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration; she likewise dances perfectly well. — 'Heavens!' cried I, in my turn; 'what perfections, my good aunt! so many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune: one of these talents is sufficient for the purpose.'

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the hour of the prince's couchée; then giving orders to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me, that the prince, in order to get rid of his company the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of his being sick; but that he would rise again in an hour, and, by a back-door, gain a private stair that led into the court-yard.

When he had informed me of what they had concerted together, he posted me in a place through which he assured me they would pass; and there I danced attendance so long, that I began to think our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire of

seeing Catalina, as if princes usually dropped these sorts of whims before they had satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether, when two men accosted me, whom having discerned to be those I expected, I conducted them to my coach, in which they seated themselves, while I got upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house. I then handed the prince and his companion out of the coach, and we walked towards the place for which we were bound. The gate opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though, by way of distinction, there was a small lamp fixed to the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall, where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay dishabille, so artfully disposed that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our prince would have been very well satisfied with Signiora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to chuse; but the charms of young

Catalina, as they deserved, had the preference. 'Well, my prince,' said the Count de Lemos; 'was it possible for us to procure your highness the pleasure of seeing two ladies more handsome than these?' — 'I am ravished with them both,' replied the prince; 'and I shall never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail.'

After this compliment, so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honourable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion, are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with an intention of adding fuel to the fire, I told the gallant, that his nymph sung and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung in such an affecting manner, that the prince dropped down at her feet in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture; and only observe that, during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house, be-

cause of the day's approach. We the gentlemen-undertakers carried him back to his apartment with great dispatch, and then went to our different homes, as well satisfied with having fitted him with a she-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounted this adventure to the duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, — ‘The prince of Spain is so much engrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he purposes to visit her often, and attach himself to her alone. He wanted to send her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. “My dear Lemos,” said he, “you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well that I incommode, nay, exhaust you: but my heart retains the obligation, and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude, otherwise than in thought, for all your friendship, you shall not repent of having laid me under an obligation.” — “My prince,” said I, leaving him that instant, “I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want.”

‘It is not difficult to satisfy his demand,’ said the duke to his nephew — ‘Santillane,

‘go fetch the money; or, if you please, he
‘will purchase the jewels; for he is a perfect
‘connoisseur in stones, especially in *rubies*!
‘— Is not this true, Gil Blas?’ added he,
looking at me with a satyrical smile. ‘Your
‘grace is very severe,’ I replied; ‘I see that
‘you want to make Monsieur the count mer-
‘ry at my expense. This happened accord-
‘ingly. The nephew asked what mystery
‘there was in these words. ‘Nothing,’ an-
‘swered the duke, laughing; ‘only Santillane,
‘one day thought proper to exchange a
‘diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found
‘that he had gained neither honour, nor
‘profit by the bargain.’

I should have thought myself easily quit, if the minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging; and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His excellency, after having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller’s house, where we chose jewels, which we showed to the prince for his approbation; and which, being afterwards entrusted to me, in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the duke’s money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies,

when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of an handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of ear-rings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a mere giply to our monarch's son; but, that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine master-piece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.

CHAP. XII.

Catalina's real Character. The Perplexity and Uneasiness of Gil Blas. The Precaution he was obliged to take for his own Quiet.

Just as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and enquiring into the cause, was told, Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sung full throat, and frequently broke out into loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the Seven Wise Men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to the company — 'Gentle-

‘men, ‘tis only my master come home; be
‘not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I
‘will go and speak two words to him, and
‘rejoin you in a twinkling.’ So saying, he
‘came to my apartment. ‘What a hubbub
‘is this?’ said I; ‘what sort of people are
‘those you entertain below? are they poets?’
— ‘No, indeed, Sir, if you please,’ he re-
‘plied? it were pity to bestow your wine on
‘such company, I make a better use of it.
‘There is among my guests a very rich
‘young fellow, who wants for his money an
‘employment by your interest; and for him
‘alone I give this entertainment: at every
‘draught he drinks I raise the gratification
‘you are to receive ten pistoles, and will
‘make him drink till day.’ — ‘If that be
‘the case,’ I replied, ‘go back to thy friends,
‘and don’t spare the wine in my cellar.’

I did not think this a proper season to
talk with him about Catalina: but next
‘morning, when I got up, I spoke to him in
‘this manner — ‘Friend Scipio, thou know-
‘est how we live together; I treat three more
‘like a comrade than a domestic; and of
‘consequence thou wilt be to blame in de-
‘ceiving me as a master. Let us then lay
‘aside all reserve with one another. I will
‘tell thee something that will surprise thee,
‘and thou shalt disclose to me thy real senti-
‘ments of those two women with whom
‘thou hast made me acquainted. Between

‘thee and me, I suspect them to be two art-
‘ful pusses, cunning in proportion to the
‘simplicity which they affect. If my opi-
‘nion does them justice, the Prince of Spain
‘has no great cause to be well pleased with
‘me; for I confess it was for him that I
‘wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried
‘him to Catalina’s house, and he is become
‘passionately fond of her.’ — ‘Signior,’ an-
‘swered Scipio, ‘I am too well used by you,
‘to be wanting in sincerity with my master.
‘I had yesterday a private conversation with
‘the maid of these two princesses, and she
‘related their history, which to me seemed
‘very diverting. You shall hear it in two
‘words.

‘Catalina is daughter to a poor gentle-
‘man of Arragon; and finding herself, at
‘the age of fifteen, an orphan, as handsome
‘as poor, listened to an old commander,
‘who conducted her to Toledo, where he
‘died in six months, after having served as a
‘parent rather than a husband to her. She
‘secured his fortune, consisting of some mo-
‘veables and three hundred pistoles in rea-
‘dy-money, then joined herself to Signiora
‘Mencia, who was still in fashion, though
‘already in the wane. These too good friends
‘lived together, and began to behave so as
‘to attract the notice of justice, at which the
‘ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned
‘Toledo through vexation, and settled in

‘Madrid, where they have lived about two
‘years, without visiting any person in the
‘neighbourhood. But the best circumstance
‘of the story is this; they have hired two
‘small houses, separated only by a wall, hav-
‘ing in the cellar a stair of communication
‘from the one to the other. Signiora Men-
‘cia lives with a young maid-servant in one
‘of these houses, and the commander’s wi-
‘dow possesses the other, with an old duen-
‘na, who passes for her grandmother; so
‘that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece
‘brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a
‘pupil under the wings of her grandame.
‘When she acts the niece, she is called Ca-
‘talina; and when she plays the grandchild,
‘her name is Sirena.’

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and
interrupting Scipio, said— ‘What do I hear!
‘Alas! I am afraid that this cursed Arrago-
‘nian is no other than the mistress of Calde-
‘rona.’ — ‘Truly,’ he replied, ‘it is the
‘same; I thought this piece of news would
‘have given you pleasure.’— ‘Thou art very
‘much mistaken,’ answered I; ‘I have more
‘cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it; dost
‘thou not see the consequences?’ — ‘No, in
‘faith,’ resumed Scipio; ‘what mischief can it
‘produce? you are not sure that Don Ro-
‘drigo will discover what passes; and if you
‘are afraid of his getting information, you
‘have nothing to do but prepossess the mi-

‘nister in your favour, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if, after this, Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, he will perceive that his sole design is to injure you out of a spirit of revenge.’

Scipio by this discourse banished my fear; and, resolving to follow his advice, I informed the Duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo’s mistress to the prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favourite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on my old way; saying, that after all, it was glorious for Calderona to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of Spain, and to be as well received by her as his highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his grace.

Imagining that, by this precaution, I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous shelves that environed it, my fear vanished. I still accompanied the Prince to the house of Catalina, (alias, the fair Sirena) who was artful enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her

embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

CHAP. XIII.

Gil Blas continues to act the Man of Consequence. Hears News of his Family, which make but small Impression upon him, and quarrels with Fabricius.

I have already observed, that in the morning my anti-chamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals; but I would not receive them *vivâ voce*; and, according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to each solicitor— ‘Give ‘in a memorial.’ I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who came to put me in mind of a year’s rent being due. As for my butcher, and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memorials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don’t intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of

the grandees as if I had been a man in their sphere. If (for example) I had occasion to mention the Duke of Alva, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them without ceremony, Alva, and Medina Sidonia. In a word, I became so haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas! poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as enquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Austurias! I did not even think of you! The court is like the river Lethe, in making us forget our parents and friends, when they are under misfortunes.

I no longer, therefore, remembered my family; when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a plebeian, I asked him what he wanted with me. 'How! Signior Gil Blas!' said he, 'don't you remember me?' In vain did I consider him attentively: I was obliged to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. 'I am,' he replied, 'one of your old school-fellows, a native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada the grocer, your uncle the canon's neighbour. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at Ciega Gallina *).'

*) Blind-Man's Buff.

‘I have,’ said I, ‘but a confused idea of
‘the amusements of my infancy: the busi-
‘ness in which I have been engaged since
‘that time, has effaced them from my me-
‘mory.’ — ‘I am come,’ he resumed, ‘to
‘Madrid, to settle accounts with my father’s
‘correspondent; and I heard it said, that you
‘was on a good footing at court, and alrea-
‘dy as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on
‘your good fortune; and will, at my return
‘into the country, overwhelm your family
‘with joy, by telling them such an agreeable
‘piece of news.’

I could not, in common decency, for-
bear asking in what situation he had left
my father, mother, and uncle; but this
piece of duty I performed so coldly, that
the grocer had no great reason to admire
the force of blood. He seemed shocked at
my indifference for those who ought to
have been so dear to me; and being a plain
vulgar young fellow, said bluntly — ‘I
‘thought you had more tenderness and sen-
‘sibility for your relations. How coldly do
‘you enquire into their circumstances!
‘know, that your father and mother are still
‘at service; and the good canon Gil Perez,
‘burdened with old age and infirmities,
‘draws near his end. People ought to have
‘some natural affection; and since you are
‘in a condition to assist your parents, I advise
‘you, as a friend, to lend two hundred pi-

‘stoles yearly for their support; by which
‘means you will make their life easy and
‘happy, without any inconvenience to your-
‘self.’ Instead of being moved at the picture
which he drew of my family, I was dis-
gusted at the liberty which he took in advi-
sing me, without being desired so to do.
With a little more address, perhaps, he
might have persuaded me; but his freedom
had a contrary effect. He perceived my
displeasure by my silence; and continuing
his exhortation with more malice than cha-
rity, made me lose my patience entirely.
‘Oh, this is too much!’ cried I in a passion.
‘Go, Mr. Muscada, and meddle with your
‘own concerns: it becomes you well indeed
‘to prescribe to me! I know my duty, on
‘this occasion, better than you can teach
‘me.’ So saying, I pushed the grocer out of
my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper
and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, how-
ever, did not fail of having some effect: I
reproached myself with being an unnatural
son, and was melted accordingly. I recall-
ed the care they had taken of my infancy
and education; I considered the duty I owed
to my parents; and my reflections were at-
tended with some transports of acknowl-
edgment, which, however, came to nothing:
they were soon stifled by my ingratitude,
and succeeded by profound oblivion. There
are many parents who have children of
the same stamp.

The

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed, entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and thoughtful; in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricio, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to Fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying — ‘Truly, Gil Blas, thou art growing out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and freedom of behaviour, which are the soul of friendship; on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealest from me thy secret views; nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew.’

‘You joke, sure!’ said I, with an air of indifference; I can’t perceive any change in myself.’ — ‘Thy own eyes are no judges,’ answered he; ‘they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend: Do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to

‘knock at thy door in the morning, thou camest in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now, behold the difference; thou art attended by half a score of lackeys; I am obliged to wait in thy anti-chamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received! with a forced politeness, an air of importance; so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee on the footing of a comrade? No, Santilane, no; I can’t put up with it. Farewel! Let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who censures thy behaviour, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself.’

I found myself more irritated than reclaimed by his reproaches, and let him go without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion, at that time, the friendship of a poet was not of such value as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it: I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the king, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a similitude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I knew not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already

made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the king, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectable personages. O Fortune! how are thy favours usually dispensed! The Stoick Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

Scipio advises Gil Blas to marry, proposes the Daughter of a rich and noted Goldsmith for his Wife: the Steps which were taken in Consequence of this Advice.

One evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day. 'A masterpiece!' he replied: 'I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance.' — 'The daughter of a goldsmith!' cried I, with an air of disdain; 'hast thou lost thy senses? how canst thou propose a

‘wife from the city? One who has certainly
‘merit, and is on a sure footing at court,
‘ought to entertain more elegant views,
‘methinks.’ — ‘How, Sir!’ replied Scipio;
‘sure you are not in earnest: consider that
‘the male alone enobles; and be not more
‘delicate than a thousand noblemen whose
‘names I could mention. Do you know that
‘the heiress in question is worth an hundred
‘thousand ducats? Is not this a fine morsel
‘of plate?’ When I heard him talk of such a
round sum, I became more tractable. ‘I
‘yield,’ said I to my secretary; ‘the dowry de-
‘termines me: when shall I touch it?’ —
‘Softly, Sir,’ he replied, ‘a little patience: I
‘must first communicate the proposal to her
‘father, and obtain his consent.’ — ‘Good!’
‘said I, laughing heartily: are you still there-
‘abouts? I find the marriage is far advan-
‘ced.’ — ‘Farther than you imagine,’ answer-
ed he; ‘I want only an hour’s conversation
‘with the goldsmith, and will answer for
‘his consent. But before we proceed, let us
‘come to a composition, if you please. Sup-
‘pose I procure for you those hundred thou-
‘sand ducats, how many will fall to my
‘share?’ — ‘Twenty thousand,’ I replied.
‘Heaven be praised!’ said he: ‘I limit the
‘acknowledgment to ten thousand: for once
‘you are more generous than I. To-mor-
‘row I will set this negotiation on foot; and
‘you may depend upon its success; other-
‘wise I am but an ass.’ In effect, two days

after, he said — ‘I have spoken to Signior Gabriel Salero the goldsmith, and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you for a son-in-law; and you shall have his daughter, with an hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear that you are in favour with the minister.’ — ‘If that be the case,’ answered I to Scipio, ‘I shall be married very soon: but, a-propos, hast thou seen the girl? is she handsome?’ — ‘Not so handsome as the dowry,’ said he: ‘between you and me this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature; but, luckily that you don’t mind.’ — ‘No, faith, my child,’ said I; ‘we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying, and look for beauty nowhere but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to centre in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect.’

‘This is not all,’ resumed Scipio; ‘Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night; and we have agreed, that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only as a simple guest; and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this you may see that he wants to study your temper, before he proceeds; so that

‘you must be upon your guard before him.’
‘— Zooks!’ said I, with an air of confidence;
‘let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I will lose nothing by his scrutiny.’

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another several times. He was an honest citizen, polite *hasta porfiar* *), as the saying is. He introduced me to Signiora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments, without infringing the treaty. I said a great many nothings, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowsy, I know not. What a fine house did Signior Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru, that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honour to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons

*) Even to obstinacy.

equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night I treated my goldsmith in my turn; and as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mean mortal in comparison of these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a middling fortune; twenty thousand ducats a year, or so. Upon which, these greedy hunters of honour and riches cried, I was in the wrong: and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the prime-minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and ask if he was pleased with

my behaviour: 'I am charmed with it!' replied the citizen; 'the young man has won my heart. But, Signior Scipio,' added he, 'I conjure you, by our old acquaintance, speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know; tell me that of Signior Santillane: is he a gamester? is he a rake? What is his vicious inclination? Pray, don't conceal it.' — 'You affront me, Signior Gabriel, by asking such a question,' replied the mediator: I am not so much in my master's interests as in yours. If he had any bad quality, capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law! No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But between you and me, I know no other fault in him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man.' — So much the better,' cried the goldsmith; 'I am glad of it. Go, friend; assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I would bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the minister.'

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation, than I hastened to Salero's house, to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their behaviour towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and

presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His excellency received him very courteously, and assured him, that he was very glad he had chosen, for his son-in-law, a man for whom he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities; and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed, that the tear stood in his eye; he clasped me in his arms at parting, and said— ‘My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela’s husband, that you shall be married in eight days at farthest.

CHAP. II.

Gil Blas, by Accident, remembers Don Alphonso de Leyva, and does him a Piece of Service out of Vanity.

The order of my history requires, that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the service which I did to Don Alphonso, my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now that I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant; and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I reflected,

that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honour. Addressing myself therefore to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Caesar de Leyva and his son; and that, having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the government of Valencia for either the one or the other. The minister answered — ‘With all my heart, Gil Blas; I love to see the grateful and generous. Besides I esteem the family thou speakest of; the Leyvas have been always good servants to the king, and well deserve that place. Thou mayest dispose of it at thy own pleasure: I give it thee for a nuptial present.’

Ravished with my success, I went, without loss of time, and desired Calderona to make out letters-patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending, in respectful silence, until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened, and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderona heard in their turns. His different behaviour to different people was very remarkable: he re-

ceived some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honoured with a bow, and conducted them to his closet-door. He put (to use the expression) different shades of consideration in the civilities he showed. On one hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship that surprized me not a little. ‘Ah, my dear colleague!’ cried he; ‘what affair procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? Is there any thing in which I can serve you?’ I told him the cause of my visit; and he assured me in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done by the same hour next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of his antichamber,

whither he never used to go except with grandees, and there embraced me anew.

‘What is the meaning of all this civility?’ said I to myself, going out; what can it forebode? Sure Calderona meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous of gaining my friendship; or, feeling his favour on the decline, cultivates me with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf.’ I did not know which of these conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True, indeed, he abated a great deal of that politeness in his reception of other people who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and disobliging to every body: but all of them were sufficiently revenged by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man in a very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did not even look at the cavalier, said to him, in a surly tone — ‘What is your name, friend?’ — ‘I was called Francillo in my infancy,’ replied the cavalier, very cool.

ly; 'since that time I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zuniga *); and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedro-so.' Calderona, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavoured to excuse himself. 'Signior,' said he to the count, 'I beg pardon, if not knowing you —' 'I want none of thy excuses,' said Francillo, with disdain; 'I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayest, if thou wilt, be vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet.'

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke, and resolved to take care how I behaved to people in giving audience, and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it by an express to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which his excellency informed him, that the king had named him to the government of Valencia **). I took no notice of the share I

*) Zuniga, one of the most ancient families of Castile.

**) Valencia, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, on the River Turio. It is the see of an archbishop, and has an university. Trade, and manu-

had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing myself with the hope of telling him by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his employment.

CHAP. III.

The Preparations for the Marriage of Gil Blas, and the great Event that rendered them useless.

Let us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony; Salero bought rich clothes for the bride; and I hired a chambermaid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of an

factures flourish here; the principal of the latter is that of silk, which the women and children spin before their houses. They export large quantities of wine, oil, and fruit; and the inhabitants have an easy and agreeable conversation, without any of that stiffness observable in the rest of Spain; and on the whole, the place is so agreeable as to have obtained the name of *Valencia la hermosa*; Valencia the beautiful.

hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I showed great respect to the goldsmith and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and cit-like observations I patiently listened. Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed into a great hall, where we were regaled with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which was not ill executed, although they had not chosen the best hands in Madrid. Several gay airs, with which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us all in such good humour, that we began to form country-dances. God knows how we performed, since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore; though I had no other principles of that art than two or three lessons which I received from a coxcomb of a dancing-master, who came to teach the pages, when I lived with the Marchioness of Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted ourselves, it being time for each to think of retiring, I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. 'Adieu, my son!' said Salero, embracing me; 'I will wait on you to-morrow morning with the dowry in good gold.'— 'My dear father!' I replied, 'you shall be very welcome.' Then wishing the

family good night, I got into the coach that waited for me at the gate, and drove home-wards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some on horseback, others a-foot, armed with swords and carbines, surrounded the coach, and stopped it, crying— 'In the king's name!' They made me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-chaise, where the chief of the cavaliers mounting along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia. I soon guessed that my fellow traveller was an honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen, that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me anything of the matter. I observed, that perhaps he might be mistaken in his man. 'No, no,' said he, 'I know my business better. You are Signior de Santillane; and you I have orders to conduct to the place for which we are bound.' Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night along Mancanarez in profound silence, changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia*), where I was locked up in the tower.

CHAP.

*) Segovia, a city of Old Castile in Spain, situated on the River Tago, over which is a noble aqueduct built by

CHAP. IV.

The Treatment of Gil Blas in the Tower of Segovia, and the Manner in which he learned the Cause of his Imprisonment.

They began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor, worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploring my condition, for as yet I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderona; nevertheless, though I suspected that he had discovered the whole, I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Sometimes I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his excellency; and sometimes I thought that he himself was the cause of my misfortune, for some political reasons that often induce ministers to use their favourites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated with these different conjectures, when the light of day, pe-

Trajan. The principal mint of Spain is fixed in this city; and the woollen manufacture here is the best in all Spain. It is encompassed with strong walls, adorned with lofty towers. Here is also a famous university and bishoprick. It lies thirty five miles north of Madrid.

netrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was thus confined. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two sources of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned myself to sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, goaler as he was, felt an emotion of pity. 'Signior Prisoner,' said he, 'don't despair: you must not be so sensible of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Meanwhile eat the king's allowance with a good grace.'

My comforter went out when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honour to my provision, which, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the king's bounty, as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than alluage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the mean time, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened; and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in his hand, approach-

ed me, saying — ‘Signior Gil Blas, behold
‘one of your old friends. I am that Don
‘Andrea de Tordefillas who lived with you
‘at Granada, and was gentleman to the arch-
‘bishop, while you was in favour with that
‘prelate. You desired him, you may re-
‘member, to employ his credit in my be-
‘half, and by his interest I was named for
‘an employment in Mexico: but, instead of
‘embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the
‘city of Alicant, where I married the
‘daughter of him who commanded the ca-
‘stle, and by a train of adventures which I
‘shall recount to you by and by, I am now
‘become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I
‘have express orders to keep you from the
‘speech of every living soul, to make you
‘lie upon straw, and live upon bread and
‘water only. But I have too much huma-
‘nity not to pity your misfortune: besides,
‘you have done me service; and my grati-
‘tude prevails over the orders which I have
‘received. Far from being the instrument
‘of that cruelty which they would exercise
‘upon you, I intend to soften the rigour of
‘your fate. Get up, and follow me.’

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my
thanks, my understanding was so much dis-
turbed, that I could not answer one word.
I did not fail, however, to follow him,
through a court and up a narrow stair, to a
small room, quite atop of the tower, I was

not a little surprized, when I entered this chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. 'The victuals will presently be brought,' said Tordefillas; 'and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see from your window the flowery banks of Erema, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of your grief shall be mellowed by time into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an excursion with your eyes over such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be assured of being well provided in linen, and other necessaries befitting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, comfortable diet, and be furnished with as many books as you chuse to read. In a word you shall be as well treated as a prisoner can be.'

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging offers, I took courage, gave my gaoler a thousand thanks, told him that he recalled me to life by this generous behaviour, and that I wished I might ever again have an opportunity of showing my grati-

tude. 'And why not have an opportunity?' he replied. 'Do you think you have lost your liberty for ever? You are mistaken; and I dare assure you, that you will be quit for a few months imprisonment.' — 'What say you, Signior Don Andrea!' cried I; 'it seems then you know the cause of my misfortune.' — 'I confess,' said he, 'I am not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil, who brought you hither, imparted the secret to me, and I shall now reveal it.

'He told me, that the king, being informed of your having, in concert with the Count de Lemos, carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady, had, to punish both, exiled the count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the rigour which you have experienced since your arrival.' — 'And how,' said I, 'did this affair come to the knowledge of the king? it is that circumstance in particular of which I want to be informed.' — 'And that circumstance,' he replied, 'is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who in all likelihood is himself ignorant of the matter.'

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions,

oil, and saffron; an olla podrida *) in another; and the third contained a turkey-powt on a marmalade of berengena **). When Tordefillas saw that we had every thing we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse; and having locked the door, we sat down at table opposite to one another. 'Let us begin,' said he, 'with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite, after a fast of two days.' So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half starved; and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I balked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel images which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper in vain exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellency of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I should have drunk it without pleasure at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such absence of thought, that, when it was ended, I could not have

*) *Olla podrida*, a dish composed of all sorts of food.

**) *Berengena* a fruit growing like a cucumber, and used like French beans, with mutton, etc.

repeated one word of what he had said. He concluded, that he undertook too much, in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying— ‘Signior de Santillane, I will leave you to your repose, or rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But, I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the king is naturally good; when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished.’ So saying, Mr. Keeper went down stairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off every thing, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.

CHAP. V.

His Reflections before he went to Sleep, and an Account of the Noise that waked him.

I spent two hours at least in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. ‘I am confined here then,’ said I to myself, ‘for having contributed to the pleasures of their apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that kind to so young a prince; for his tender years alone make

‘me guilty! Had he been in a more advanced age, the king would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the prince, or that of the Duke of Lerma, who will, doubtless, revenge his nephew the Count de Lemos? How then has the king discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.

Hither my doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects had been abandoned. ‘My strong box!’ cried I; ‘my dear riches, what is become of you! into whose hands are you fallen? Alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were amassed!’ I painted to myself the disorder that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favourable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapours of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep; and, probably, the

day would have surprized me in this condition, had I not been waked all of a sudden by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and, hearing no more, believed it was a dream; but, in a moment, my ear was struck again with the sound of the same instrument, and the same voice, which sung the following verses —

*Ay de mi! un anno felice
Parece un soplo ligero;
Pero fin dicha un instante
Es un siglo di tormento.*)*

My sorrow was encreased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. 'I have but too well experienced the truth of these words,' said I: 'methinks the season of my prosperity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison.' I relapsed into a terrible revery, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the task. My lamentations, however, ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room, by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of

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*) Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze;
but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.

which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said; the Errema, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing to my view but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably, I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already half dressed: when Tordefillas came in, followed by an old woman servant, who brought shirts and towels for me use. ‘Signior Gil Blas,’ said he, ‘here is linen: don’t be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well,’ added he: ‘how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?’ — ‘I should have slept, perhaps, till now,’ answered I, ‘had I not been awaked by a voice accompanied by a guitar.’ — ‘The cavalier who has disturbed your repose,’ said he, ‘is a stateprisoner, whose chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one

‘another, You will find a mutual consolation in each other’s acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both.’

I assured Don Andrea that I was extremely sensible of his kindness in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day; and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprized me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold to most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by showing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add to this, that Nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of understanding and valour; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sung in the night, for fear of incommoding me, notwithstanding my entreaties that he would not constrain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance,

and became stronger and stronger every day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since, by our discourse, we aided one another, reciprocally, to bear our misfortunes with patience.

One afternoon, entering his room, just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he, placing himself on his bed's feet, played a very moving air, and sung words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him, with a smile— 'Signior Knight, these
'are words which you was never obliged to
'employ in your amours: you are too accomplished to find the women cruel.' —
'You have too good an opinion of me,' he replied; 'I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften
'a heart which I believed harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who
'treated me with extreme rigour. I must
'entertain you with that story, by which
'you will also learn the cause of my misfortune.'

CHAP. VI.

*The History of Don Gaston de Cogollos,
and Donna Helena de Galisteor.*

‘**N**ot much less than four years ago, I set
‘out from Madrid for Coria, to visit Donna
‘Eleonora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the
‘richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I
‘am. I was no sooner arrived at her house,
‘than love began to invade my repose. The
‘windows of my apartment faced the latti-
‘ces of a lady who lived opposite to my
‘aunt’s house; and I could easily perceive
‘her by the assistance of the width of her
‘grates, and the narrowness of the street.
‘I did not neglect the opportunity; and
‘found my neighbour so handsome, that I
‘was enchanted at once. I expressed my
‘passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she
‘could not be mistaken. She perceived it
‘accordingly; but was not at all disposed to
‘pride herself in the discovery, and still less
‘to answer my coquetries.

‘I made enquiries about this dangerous
‘person who captivated hearts so suddenly;
‘and learned that her name was Donna He-
‘lena; that she was the only daughter of
‘Don George de Galisteo, who possessed a
‘rich manor a few leagues from Corio;
‘that many matches had been in her offer;
‘but her father rejected them all, because

‘he was resolved to give her in marriage to
‘his nephew Don Augustine de Olighera,
‘who, in the mean time, had the privilege
‘of seeing and conversing with his cousin
‘every day. I was not discouraged by this
‘piece of information; on the contrary, it
‘inflamed my passion; and the proud plea-
‘sure of supplanting a beloved rival excited
‘me, perhaps, even more than my love, to
‘pursue my point. I continued, then, to
‘address Helena with the most passionate
‘looks. I supplicated her maid Felicia in
‘the same language, in order to employ her
‘assistance. I even talked on my fingers:
‘but these gallantries were of no use. I
‘made as little impression on the maid as on
‘her mistress; they seemed equally cruel and
‘inaccessible.

‘Since they refused to answer the language
‘of my eyes, I had recourse to other in-
‘terpreters; and set people to work, to dis-
‘cover what acquaintances Felicia had in
‘town. They got notice, that an old gen-
‘tlewoman, called Theodora, was her best
‘friend, and that they often visited one
‘another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I
‘went to Theodora in person, and, by pre-
‘sents, engaged her in my interest. She
‘espoused my cause, promised to procure
‘for me a private conversation with her
‘friend at her house, and kept her promise
‘the very next day. ‘I am no longer un-

“happy,” “said I to Felicia: “since my mis-
“fortunes have excited your compassion.
“How much am I indebted to your friend,
“for having prevailed upon you to grant me
“the satisfaction of an interview!” — “Sig-
“nior,” answered she, “Theodora can do
“any thing with me: she has engaged me in
“your behalf; and if it be in my power to
“make you happy, you shall soon enjoy
“your wish; but, with all my good will, I
“don’t know that I can give you much assi-
“stance; for not to flatter you, you have
“never formed a more difficult enterprize.
“You are in love with a lady who is prepos-
“sessed in favour of another cavalier: and
“what sort of a lady! one so full of pride
“and dissimulation, that if, by dint of per-
“severance and assiduity, you should suc-
“ceed so far as to cost her some sighs, don’t
“imagine that her pride will give you the
“pleasure of hearing them.” — “Ah! my
“dear Felicia!” cried I, in a transport of
“grief;— why do you describe the obstacles
“which I have to surmount! I am assassina-
“ted by your information! deceive me rather
“than drive me to despair!” So saying, I
“took one of her hands, and pressing it in
“mine, put upon her finger a diamond
“worth three hundred pistoles, accompa-
“nied by such moving expressions as brought
“the tears into her eyes. She was too much
“affected by my discourse, and too well sa-
“tisfied with my behaviour, to leave me al-

‘together without consolation. She began
‘to smooth the difficulties a little, saying —
‘Signior, what I have represented ought not
‘to deprive you of hope. Your rival, ’tis
“true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come
“and visit his cousin, and talk to her when-
“ever he pleases; and this is a circumstance
“favourable for you. Their being accu-
“stomed to see one another every day, ren-
“ders their conversation a little languid,
“they seem to part without pain, and meet
“again without pleasure; one would think
“they were already married.

“In a word, I don’t perceive that my
“mistress has a violent passion for Don Au-
“gustine: besides, as to personal qualifica-
“tions, there is a difference between you
“and him that must turn to your account in
“the eyes of such a delicate young lady as
“Donna Helena. Be not discouraged there-
“fore: continue your gallantry, which I
“will second; and I will not let slip one
“opportunity of making every thing you do
“to please her tend to your advantage with
“my mistress. In vain shall she attempt to
“disguise her sentiments; I will soon dis-
“cover them in spite of her dissimulation.”

‘After this conversation, Felicia and I
‘parted, very well satisfied with one ano-
‘ther. I prepared anew to ogle Don Geor-
‘ge’s daughter, whom I treated with a sere-
‘nade, in which the verses you have heard
‘were

“were sung by a fine voice, which I had
“provided for the purpose. After the con-
“cert, the maid, in order to sound the mi-
“stresses, asked how she had been entertained.
“The voice,” said Donna Helena, “gave me
“pleasure.”— and were not the words which
“were sung very moving?” replied the maid.
“I paid no attention to them,” said the lady;
“I listened to the tune only; I took no notice
“of the verses, neither do I desire to know
“who gave the serenade.”— “If that be the
“case,” cried the waiting-woman, “poor
“Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his
“reckoning, and not very wise in spending
“his time in looking at our lattices.”—
“Perhaps it may not be he,” said the mi-
“stresses, coldly, but some other cavalier,
“who has declared his passion for me by
“this concert.”— “Pardon me, Madame,”
“replied Felicia; “it is no other than Don
“Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me
“this morning, in the street, and begged
“me to tell you, that he adores you, in
“spite of the rigour with which you repay his
“love; and that, in short, he should think
“himself the happiest of mankind, if you
“would allow him to manifest his passion in
“the usual course of gallantry. This dis-
“course,” added she, “sufficiently proves
“that I am not mistaken.”

“Don George’s daughter changed counte-
“nance all of a sudden, and, darting a se-
“vere look at her maid— You might have

“dispensed,” said she, “with repeating that
“impertinent conversation to me. Let me
“have no such reports for the future if you
“please; and if that rash youth shall have
“the presumption to speak to you again,
“tell him to make his addressee to one who
“will regard his gallantry more than I do,
“and to chuse a more honourable pastime
“than that of being all day long at his win-
“dows, to observe what I do in my apart-
“ment.”

“All this was faithfully reported to me,
“in a second interview with Felicia; who,
“pretending that I must not take the words
“of her mistress in a literal sense, would have
“persuaded me that the affair went on swim-
“mingly; but I, who was ignorant of finesse,
“and did not believe that the text could be
“explained in my favour, distrusted the com-
“mentary she made. She laughed at my dif-
“fidence, called for paper and ink, and said,
“Signior Knight, write immediately to
“Donna Helena in the style of a desponding
“lover. Paint your sufferings in the most
“passionate colours; and, in particular,
“complain of her prohibiting you to appear
“at your windows. Promise to obey her,
“but at the same time assure her that it will
“cost you your life. Put this into such ex-
“pressions as you gentlemen are so well skill-
“ed in, and leave the rest to me. I hope
“the event will do more honour to my pe-
“netration than you imagine.

“Had I neglected this, I should have been
“the first lover who did not take the advan-
“tages of such an opportunity to write to his
“mistress. I composed a most pathetic let-
“ter; and, before I sealed it, showed it to
“Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a
“smile, that if women have the art of capti-
“vating the men, these last, in return,
“know very well, how to cajole the wo-
“men. The waiting maid took my letter,
“then, laying strong injunctions on me to
“keep my windows shut for a few days, re-
“turned to the house of Don George.”

“Madam” said she to Donna Helena,
“when she went home, “I met Don Gaston,
“who did not fail to make up to me, and
“endeavoured to sooth me with flattering
“expressions. He asked me, with a falter-
“ing voice, like a criminal who expects his
“sentence, if I had delivered his message to
“you. Then I, faithful, and ready to exe-
“cute your orders, cut him short, with a
“vengeance; inveighed against him, loaded
“him with reproaches, and left him in the
“street, confounded at my petulance.”

“I am overjoyed,” replied Donna Hele-
“na, “that you have rid me of that impor-
“tunate young fellow; but there was no
“occasion to speak rudely to him. A young
“woman ought always to be gentle in her
“behaviour.” — “Madam,” said the maid,
“a passionate lover is not to be banished by

“words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay,
“this is seldom accomplished even by in-
“dignation and rage. Don Gaston, for ex-
“ample, was not repulsed. After having
“loaded him with reproaches (as I have said)
“I went to the house of your relation, whi-
“ther you sent me; and that lady unfortu-
“nately detained me too long; I say too
“long, because on my return, I found
“my man again, whom, I assure you, I
“did not expect to see. I was so much
“disturbed at sight of him, that my
“tongue, which never failed me before,
“could not furnish me with one syllable.
“In the mean time, what does he? He slipped
“a paper into my hand, which I kept,
“without knowing what I did, and then
“disappeared in an instant.”

“So saying, she pulled my letter out of
“her bosom, and gave it by way of joke to
“her mistress: who, taking it, as for diver-
“sion, read it over, and then affecting re-
“serve: — “Truly, Felicia,” said she, with
“a serious air, “you are a fool and a mad
“creature to receive this billet. What will
“Don Gaston think of it? and what must I
“believe? Your conduct gives me cause to
“distrust your fidelity, and may make him
“suspect that I am pleased with his passion.
“Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this in-
“stant, that I peruse with pleasure the cha-
“racters which he has wrote. You see to

“what shame you have exposed my pride.”
— “Oh, not at all, Madam!” replied the
“maid; “he can entertain no such thoughts;
“and, suppose he did, he shall not preserve
“them long. I will tell him, when next I
“see him, that I have shown his letter to
“you; that you looked at it with indiffer-
“ence; and, in short, without reading it,
“tore it with the most mortifying contempt.”

“You may safely swear that I have not
“read it,” said Donna Helena. “I should
“be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single
“words of it.” “Don George’s daughter was
“not contented with talking in this manner;
“she tore my billet, and forbid her woman
“to talk to me for the future.”

“As I promised to play the gallant no
“more at my windows, since the sight of me
“gave offence, I kept them shut several days,
“to render my obedience more affecting:
“but to supply those looks of which I was
“abridged, I prepared new serenades for my
“cruel Helen. One night I repaired under
“her balcony with musicians; and the gui-
“tars were already struck up, when a cava-
“lier came sword in hand, and disturbed the
“concert, laying about him at a furious rate
“among the performers, who immediately
“betook themselves to flight. The rage
“which animated that bold intruder awaked
“mine: I advanced to punish him, and an
“obstinate combat began. Donna Helena

and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries; these, as well as several people in the neighbourhood, came running to part the combatants, but they arrived too late, and found nobody on the field of battle, but a cavalier almost without life, weltering in his own blood, and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Every body pitied my fate, and Donna Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning with her maid, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustine de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions, without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favoured my flame, had committed this action, to show that he was not quite so passive as she be-

believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon forgotten, by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life; but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me in marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustine as a man whom, perhaps, he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera, had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies, to be a new comer, in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love; and obtained of Signior Don George the permission of speaking to his daughter in presence of her maid. What a delightful com-

‘versation this was! I entreated, I pressed the
‘lady in such a manner, to tell me if her
‘father, in yielding her to my tenderness, had
‘done any violence to her inclination, that
‘she owned I was not beholden to her obe-
‘dience alone. After this charming confess-
‘ion, my whole study was to please her,
‘and contrive entertainments, until the day
‘of our nuptials, which were to be celebra-
‘ted by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all
‘the nobility of Coria and the neighbour-
‘hood intended to appear.

‘I gave a grand entertainment to Don
‘George and his daughter, with all their re-
‘lations and friends, at a superb country-
‘house which my aunt had without the
‘town, on the side of Manroi. Here a con-
‘cert of vocal and instrumental music was
‘prepared by my order, together with a
‘company of strollers to represent a comedy.
‘In the middle of the feast, one came and
‘whispered to me, that there was a man in
‘the hall who wanted to speak with me. I
‘got up from table to see who it was, and
‘found a stranger, who looked like a valet
‘de chambre, and who presented to me a
‘letter, which I opened, and read these
‘words—

“If you have a regard for your honour,
“as every knight of your order ought to
“have, you will not fail to be to-morrow
“morning in the plain of Manroi, where

“you will find a cavalier ready to give satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and to put you, if he can, out of a condition to espouse Donna Helena.

“Don AUG. de OLIGHERA.”

“If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don Augustine kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the feast, and said to the man who brought the letter— “Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning before sun-rise, at the appointed place.”

“Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared, during the rest of the day, as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town,

“in the same manner as he had come out.
“As for my part, I staid in the country-house,
“on pretence of taking the air next morn-
“ing; but the true reason was, that I might
“be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead
“of going to bed, I waited with patience for
“day, which as soon as I perceived, I mount-
“ed my best horse, and set out alone, as if
“I intended to take a ride in the country. I
“advanced towards Manroi, and discovered
“in the plain a man on horseback, coming
“towards me with full speed; upon which I
“put spurs to my horse, to save him one
“half of the way. We soon met, and I
“found it was my rival. “Knight,” said he,
“in an insolent tone “it is with regret that I
“come to blows with you a second time;
“but it is your own fault. After the ad-
“venture of the serenade, you ought to have
“renounced Don George’s daughter with a
“good grace, or at least have concluded that
“you would not be so easily quit, if you
“persisted in your addresses to her.”— “You
“are too proud,” answered I, “of an advan-
“tage which perhaps you owed more to the
“darkness of the night, than to your supe-
“rior skill. You don’t consider that the
“success of these rencounters depends often
“on accident.”— “It is never accidental
“with me,” said he, with an arrogant air;
“and I will now show you, that, by day as
“well as night, I know how to punish those
“audacious knights who interfere with me.”

‘I made no reply to this haughty speech.
‘but alighted instantly. Don Augustine did
‘the same; we tied our horses to a tree, and
‘began to fight with equal vigour. I will
‘frankly own, that I had to do with an ene-
‘my who pushed much better than I, al-
‘though I had been two years at schools.
‘He was a complete fencer; I could not
‘possibly have exposed my life to greater
‘danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens,
‘that the strongest is vanquished by the weak-
‘est, my rival, in spite of all his skill, re-
‘ceived a thrust that went through his heart,
‘and he fell stone-dead in an instant.

‘I returned immediately to the country-
‘house, where I informed a valet de cham-
‘bre, whom I could trust, of what had hap-
‘pened, and said to him — “Dear Ramira,
‘before justice can take cognisance of this
‘event, take a good horse, and give my
‘aunt notice of the adventure. Ask of her
‘some money and jewels, and bring them
‘to me at Placentia, where thou wilt find
‘me in the first inn you come to as you en-
‘ter the city.”

‘Ramira acquitted himself of his com-
‘mission with such diligence, that he arri-
‘ved at Placentia three hours after me. He
‘told me, that Donna Eleonora was more
‘pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel
‘that revenged the affront that I had recei-
‘ved in the first; and that she had sent me

‘all her ready money and jewels, to enable
‘me to travel agreeably in foreign countries,
‘until she should get the affair accommoda-
‘ted.

‘To pass over superfluous circumstances,
‘I will only inform you, that I crossed New
‘Castile to the kingdom of Valencia, in or-
‘der to embark at Denia, from whence I
‘took passage for Italy, where I put myself
‘in a condition to visit different courts, and
‘appear in a suitable character.

‘While, far from my Helen, I endea-
‘voured, as much as in me lay, to beguile
‘my love and sorrows, she mourned my ab-
‘sence in secret at Coria. Instead of appro-
‘ving of the prosecution that her family set
‘on foot against me on account of Olighera’s
‘death, she wished that all enmity might
‘cease, and my return be hastened by a spee-
‘dy accommodation. Six months had alrea-
‘dy elapsed since she had lost me, and I be-
‘lieve her constancy would have still
‘triumphed over time, had she had nothing
‘else but time to combat: but she had still
‘more powerful enemies. Don Blas de
‘Combados, a gentleman from the western
‘side of Galicia, came to Coria, to take pos-
‘session of a rich estate, which had been in
‘vain disputed by his cousin Don Mignal
‘de Capara; and he settled in that country,
‘finding it more agreeable than his own.
‘Combados was well made, had an agreea-

ble polite behaviour, and was one of the most insinuating men in the world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity; he longed to see such a formidable lady: for this purpose he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law, gave him admittance to his house, and the liberty of speaking in his presence to Donna Helena. The Galician soon fell in love with her; that was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his proposal, but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise, to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia however was in the interests of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chamber-maid by his remonstrances: and nevertheless, all

“their efforts, during a whole year, could
“only torment Donna Helena, without sha-
“king her constancy in the least.

“Combados seeing that Don George and
“Felicia interested themselves for him in
“vain, proposed an expedient to overcome
“the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as
“she was. “This,” said he, “is what I have
“contrived: we will suppose that a mer-
“chant of Coria has received a letter from an
“Italian factor, in which, after a detail of
“things concerning commerce, are the fol-
“lowing words —

“A Spanish cavalier, whose name is Don
“Gaston de Cogollos, hat lately arrived at
“the court of Parma. He calls himself
“nephew and sole heir of a rich widow who
“lives at Coria, under the name of Donna
“Eleonora de Laxarilla. He has demanded
“the daughter of a powerful nobleman in
“marriage, but will not succeed until the
“truth is known. I am desired to apply to
“you for this purpose: pray let me know
“then if you are acquainted with this Don
“Gaston, and in what the riches of his aunt
“consist; for your answer will decide the
“marriage. Parma etc.”

“The old man looked upon this trick as
“a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in
“love; and the waiting-woman, still less
“scrupulous than her master, approved of it
“very much. The invention seemed to them

the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and, to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father, in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena — “Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustine into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your fidelity to him. He is a fickle perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter which a merchant of Coria has received from Italy.” Helena, trembling, took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunderstruck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears; but soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father, with a resolute tone — “Signior, you have been witness of my weakness; bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. ’Tis done. I now despise Don Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of mankind. But let us talk

“no more about him. Come; I am ready
“to follow Don Blas to the altar: let
“my marriage precede that of the perfidious
“man who has so ill repaid my love.” Don
“George, transported with joy at these words,
“embraced his daughter; applauded her vi-
“gorous resolution; and, glad of the happy
“success of his stratagem, made haste to com-
“plete the wishes of my rival.

“Donna Helena was thus ravished from
“me. She yielded herself suddenly to Com-
“bados, without listening to love, which, at
“the bottom of her heart, spoke in my be-
“half, or even doubting a moment of a
“piece of news which might have been sus-
“pected in a lover of less credulity. The
“haughty maid listened to nothing but her
“pride; and the resentment of the injury,
“which she thought her beauty had received,
“prevailed over the interest of her tenderness.
“A few days after her marriage, however, she
“felt some remorse for having been so precipi-
“tate. She reflected that the merchant’s letter
“might have been feigned, and that suspi-
“cion gave her some uneasiness; but the
“amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time
“to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her re-
“pose. His sole study was to amuse her; and
“in this he succeeded by a continual succe-
“sion of various pleasures, which he had art
“enough to invent.

“She seemed very well satisfied with
“such a gallant husband, and they lived to-
“gether

‘gether in perfect harmony, when my aunt
‘accommodated my affair with the relations
‘of Don Augustine, and wrote immediately
‘to Italy, to advertise me of her success.
‘Being then at Reggio, in the farthermost
‘part of Calabria, I went over into Sicily,
‘from thence to Spain, and at length repaired
‘to Coria, on the wings of love. Donna
‘Eleonora, who had not in her letter mentioned
‘the marriage of Don George’s
‘daughter, informed me of it on my arrival,
‘and observed that I was afflicted at the
‘news: “You are in the wrong, nephew,”
‘said she, “to be so much grieved at the loss
‘of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice,
‘and banish from your memory a person
‘unworthy of possessing a place in it.”

‘As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit
‘which had been practised on Donna Helena,
‘she was in the right to talk in this manner,
‘and could not have given me a more prudent
‘advice; which, therefore, I promised
‘to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference,
‘if I should find myself incapable
‘of vanquishing my passion. I could not,
‘however, resist my curiosity, to know how
‘this marriage had been made; and, to be
‘informed of the particulars, I resolved to
‘apply to Felicia’s friend, Dame Theodora,
‘whom I have mentioned before. I went to
‘her house, and there, by accident, found
‘Felicia: who, expecting nothing less than

“to see me, was confounded, and endeavoured to go away, that she might avoid an explanation, which she concluded I would demand. I stopped her saying— “Why do you fly me? Is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman of having refused me the hearing?”

“Signior,” answered the waiting-woman, “I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again, without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accomplice in seducing her.” — O Heaven!” cried I, “have you the presumption to tell me so! Explain yourself immediately.” Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and, perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to give me some consolation: she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigour of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

“I pass over the infinite contradictions she underwent before she could prevail upon

‘Donna Helena to see me. This, however,
‘she accomplished; and it was concerted
‘between them, that I should be privately
‘admitted into the house of Don Blas, the
‘first time he should go to an estate where
‘he usually spent a day or two in hunting.
‘This design was soon put in execution: the
‘husband set out for the country; I was in-
‘formed of the occasion, and one night in-
‘troduced into his wife’s apartment.

‘I would have begun the conversation
‘with reproaches; but my mouth was stop-
‘ped. “It is in vain to recal what is passed,”
‘said the lady; “the business here is not a
“fond reconciliation; and you are mista-
“ken if you believe me disposed to flatter
“your inclination. I declare to you, Don
“Gaston, that my only motive for giving
“my consent to this private interview, in
“consequence of the pressing instances which
“have been made, is to tell you from my
“own mouth, that henceforth you must stu-
“dy to forget me altogether. Pethaps I
“might have been better satisfied with my
“fate, had it been joined to your’s; but
“since Heaven has ordained it otherwise, I
“cheerfully submit to its decrees!”

“How, Madam!” answered I; “is it not
“enough that I have lost you, and see the
“happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the
“only person I am capable of loving! must

“I also banish you from my thoughts! you
“would deprive me of my love, and rob me
“of the only blessing that now remains!
“Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possi-
“ble for any man whom you have once
“charmed, to retrieve his heart? Know
“yourself better; and cease exhorting me to
“chace your idea from my remembrance.”
— “Well, then,” she replied, with precipi-
“tation; “do you also cease to hope that I
“will favour your love with any return. I
“have but one word to say: the wife of Don
“Blas shall never be the lover of Don Gaston.
“Take your measures accordingly: fly from
“this place; and let us put a speedy end to a
“conversation with which I upbraid myself,
“in spite of the purity of my intentions,
“and which I shall think myself guilty in
“prolonging.”

“At these words, which deprived me of
“the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet;
“I addressed her in the most pathetic man-
“ner; I even employed tears to melt her;
“but all this served only to excite, perhaps,
“some sentiments of pity, which she was care-
“ful of concealing, and which were sacri-
“ficed to her duty. After having, to no pur-
“pose, exhausted all my moving expressions,
“by prayers and tears, my tenderness chan-
“ged of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my
“sword, to stab myself before the eyes of
“the inexorable Helena; who no sooner per-

“ceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me, to prevent the consequence. “Hold, Cogollos!” said she, “it is thus you consult my reputation! In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonour, and make my husband pass for an assassin.”

“I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavour was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid to save me from my own fatal design; and, without doubt, I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas (who having been apprized of our interview, instead of going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry, to overhear our conversation) had not come, and joined us with all expedition. “Don Gaston,” cried he, holding my arms, “recall your scattered reason, and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you.”

“Is it your business” said I, interrupting Don Blas, “to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your hand, to plunge a poniard in my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprize me at night, in your wife’s apartment? Is there more required to rouse your revenge? “Stab me at once, and rid yourself of

“a man who cannot cease adoring Donna
“Helena until he ceases to live.” — “In
“vain,” answered Don Blas, “you endea-
“vour to interest my honour so far, as to
“give you death: you are sufficiently pu-
“nished by your rashness; and I am so well
“pleased with the virtuous sentiments of
“my wife, that I pardon the occasion she
“took to show them. Take my advice, Co-
“gollos,” added he; “do not despair, like a
“weak lover, but submit to necessity with
“courage.”

“The prudent Galician, by such discourse,
“calmed my rage a little, and waked my
“virtue: I retired, with a design of remo-
“ving far from Helena, and the place that she
“inhabited; and, in two days returned to
“Madrid; where, resolving to employ my-
“self wholly in making my fortune, I ap-
“peared at court, and there began to make
“friends; but I was so unlucky as to attach
“myself in particular to the Marquis of Villa-
“real, a Portuguese nobleman: who, being
“suspected of a design to deliver Portugal
“from the dominion of Spain, was impri-
“soned in the castle of Alicant, where he
“now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew
“that an intimacy subsisted between that no-
“bleman and me, he caused me to be arrest-
“ed also, and conducted to this place. That
“minister believes that I am capable of
“being an accomplice in such a scheme; and

‘he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.’

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said — ‘Signior Cavalier, your honour can receive no stain from his disgrace, which will, doubtless in the end, turn to your advantage. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment, in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.’

CHAP. VII.

Scipio finds Gil Blas in the Tower of Segovia, and tells him a great Deal of News.

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordefillas, coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms — ‘Signior Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison-gate, and asked if you was not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. “Noble captain,” said he, with tears in his eyes, “don’t reject the humble request I make, to know if Signior de Santillane is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a charitable action in allowing

“me to see him. You are looked upon in
“Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity;
“and I hope you will not refuse me the fa-
“vour of conversing a moment with my
“dear master, who is not so guilty as unfor-
“tunate.” In short,” continued Don An-
drea, “the young man expressed such a desire
“of seeing you, that I have promised to
“give him that satisfaction at night.”

I assured Tordefillas, that he could not
do me a greater pleasure than to admit that
young man, who, probably had something
to communicate which it imported me very
much to know. I waited with impatience
for the moment which was to offer my
faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not
doubt that it was he: and I was not mista-
ken. He was introduced into the tower in
the evening; and his joy, which mine alone
could equal, broke forth in extraordinary
transports, when he saw me. For my part,
I was so much overjoyed at the sight of him,
that I held out my arms, and he hugged
me in his, without ceremony: the distinc-
tion between the master and secretary was
lost in this embrace; so glad were they to
see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I in-
terrogated Scipio about the condition in
which he left my house. ‘You have no
house,’ he replied; ‘and, to spare you the

‘trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I
‘will tell you in two words what passed at
‘home. Your effects were pillaged, as well
‘by the soldiers as by your own servants;
‘who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid
‘themselves their own wages with what they
‘could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the
‘address to save from their talons two large
‘bags of double pistoles, which I took out of
‘your strong-box, and secured, by putting
‘them into the custody of Salero, who will
‘re-deliver them as soon as you shall be re-
‘leased from this tower, where, I believe,
‘you will not be long boarded at his maje-
‘sty’s expense, because you was apprehend-
‘ed without the knowledge of the Duke of
‘Lerma.’

I asked how he came to know that his excellency had no hand in my misfortune. ‘Oh! as for that,’ said he, ‘I took care to be well-informed: a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke d’Uzeda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment. “Calderona,” said he, “having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Signiora Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night-time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Signior de Santillane, resolved to be revenged upon them, as well as upon his mistress. With this view, he went

“privately to the Duke d’Uzeda, and disco-
“vered the whole affair. The duke, ra-
“vished at having in his hand such a fair op-
“portunity of ruining his enemy, did not
“fail to use it. He informed the king of
“what he had heard; and represented to
“him, with great zeal, the perils to which
“the prince had been exposed. This piece
“of news roused the indignation of his ma-
“jesty, who immediately ordered Sirena
“to be shut up in the house of correction,
“banished the Count de Lemos, and con-
“demned Gil Blas to perpetual imprison-
“ment.” ‘This,’ added Scipio, ‘is what my
‘friend told me; by which you see that your
‘misfortune is the work of the Duke d’Uze-
‘da, or, rather, of Calderona.

From this information I imagined that my affairs might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew’s exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court; and I flattered myself that I should not be forgotten by his excellency. What a fine thing hope is! it consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of my effects, which had been stolen; and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode, where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means that Fortune had used to raise me to some great post; for I reasoned with myself

in this manner — ‘The partisans for the
‘prime-minister are, Don Fernando Borgia,
‘Father Jerome of Florence, and, in parti-
‘cular, Brother Lewis d’Aliaga, who owes
‘to his interest the place he at present posses-
‘es at Court. With the assistance of these
‘powerful friends, his excellency will demo-
‘lish all his foes; or, perhaps, the state will
‘soon alter its appearance; his majesty is ve-
‘ry sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more,
‘the prince, his son, will begin his reign
‘by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will
‘immediately release me from this place,
‘and present me to the new monarch, who
‘will load me with favours.’ Thus already
elevated with future pleasure, I scarce felt
my present misfortunes; but, I believe, the
two bags of doubloons, which my secreta-
ry told me he had deposited with the gold-
smith, contributed, as much as this hope,
to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and
integrity of Scipio, to be silent on that sub-
ject: I offered him the half of the money
which he had preserved from the pillage;
but this he refused. ‘I expect,’ said he,
‘another mark of acknowledgiment.’ As
much surprised at his discourse as at his re-
fusal, I asked what I could do for him.
‘Don’t let us part,’ answered he, ‘allow me
‘to attach my fortune to yours: I have a
‘friendship for you which I never felt for

‘any other master.’ — ‘And I can assure thee, child,’ said I, ‘there is no love lost; the very moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance, or Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the society thou hast proposed; and will begin it by entreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower.’ — ‘Nothing can give me more pleasure,’ cried he; ‘you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favour of him: your company is dearer to me than liberty itself. I will only sometimes go to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favourable to you: so that in me you will enjoy, at once a confidant, courier, and spy.’

These advantages were too considerable to be rejected; I therefore, kept along with me a person so useful, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

CHAP. VIII.

The Motives and Successes of Scipio's first Journey to Madrid. Gil Blas falls sick. The Consequence of his Distemper.

If it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, it must likewise be owned, that, when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremony; they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gaiety in Scipio's conversation, he might have been justly surnamed the good-humoured lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profited by his advice. 'Friend,' said I to him, one day, 'methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the duke of Lerma; this could produce no bad effect: what is thy opinion of the matter?' — 'Yes; but,' answered he, 'the great are so different from themselves, at different times, that I don't know how your letter may be received: nevertheless, I am of opinion that you should write in the mean time. Although the minister loves you, you must not trust

‘to his friendship for being remembered by
‘him. These kind of patrons easily forget
‘those who are out of sight or hearing.’

Although this was but too true, I replied — ‘I judge more favourably of my patron, to whose kindness for me I am no stranger. I am persuaded that he pities my affliction, which incessantly presents itself to his mind: he probably waits until the king’s wrath shall subside, before he takes me out of prison.’ — ‘In good time!’ he resumed; ‘I wish your opinion of his excellency may be right: implore his assistance then by a very moving letter, which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver it into his own hand.’

I immediately called for paper and ink, and composed a morsel of eloquence which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred even to the homilies of the Archbishop of Granada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would be moved with compassion, in reading the melancholy account which I gave him of the miserable condition in which I was! and in that confidence dispatched my courier; who no sooner arrived at Madrid, than he went to the minister’s house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. ‘My lord,’ said Sci-

pio, presenting to his excellency the packet
'with which he was intrusted, 'one of your
'most faithful servants, stretched upon straw,
'in a dismal dungeon in the tower of Segovia,
'most humbly entreats your grace to
'read this letter, which a turnkey, out of
'pity, gave him liberty and means to write.'
The minister opened and perused the letter;
but although he beheld in it a picture capable
of melting the most obdurate soul, far
from seeming affected at my distress, he
raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several
persons present, said to the courier,
with a furious air, — 'Friend, tell Santillane,
'that he has a great deal of assurance to
'address himself to me, after the unworthy
'action he has committed, and for which
'he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch
'who must not depend upon my protection;
'for I abandon him to the resentment of the
'king.'

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was
disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding
his confusion, endeavoured to intercede for me.
'My lord,' he resumed, 'the poor prisoner will
die of grief when he hears the answer of your
excellency.' The duke made no reply to my
mediator but by a stern look, and turned his
back upon him. It was thus the minister treated
me, the better to conceal the part he had in the
amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain; and

this ought to be a warning to all little agents, whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was plunged into the dire abyss of despondency in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage sunk apace; and notwithstanding all they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me into a violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers of the goddess Libitina.*) 'Signior Gil Blas,' said he, presenting them to me, 'Here are two Hippocrates's come to see you; they will set you a-foot again in a little time.' I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should certainly have given them a very bad reception; had I been in the least desirous of living; but at that time I felt myself so much tired of

*) The Goddess who presides over funerals,

of life, that I was glad Tordesillas had put me into their hands.

‘Signior Cavalier,’ said one of these doctors to me, in the first place, you must repose an entire confidence in our skill.’ — ‘I have a most perfect dependence on it,’ answered I: ‘with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers’ — ‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘with God’s help, you shall: at least, we will do our endeavour for that purpose.’ These gentlemen actually performed to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to the other world. Don Andrea, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar to prepare me for my end. The good father, having done his duty, had already retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bed-side. ‘My dear friend,’ said I to him, with a faint voice; so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken, and the bleedings I had undergone; ‘I leave to thee one of the bags, which are at Gabriel’s house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias, to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it, if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude; the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my

‘hard-heartedness, has perhaps, occasioned
‘their death. If Heaven has preserved them,
‘in spite of the indifference with which I re-
‘quited their affection, give them the bag of
‘doubloons, and beg them, from me, to
‘pardon my unnatural behaviour. If they
‘are no more, I charge thee employ the
‘money in causing prayers to be put up for
‘the repose of their souls and mine.’ So
saying, I stretched out my hand, which he
bathed with his tears, without being able
to answer one word; so much was the poor
young man afflicted at the prospect of losing
me. This proves, that the tears of an heir
are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit;
but I was balked. My doctors, having
abandoned me, left the field free to nature.
I was saved by their desertion. — The fe-
ver, which, according to their prognostic,
was to carry me off, quitted me immediately,
as if it intended to give them the lie. I re-
covered gradually; and, by the greatest
good luck in the world, a perfect tranquil-
lity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I
then had no need of consolation: I enter-
tained for riches and honour all the con-
tempt which the opinion of approaching
death had made me conceive; and now re-
stored, as it were, to myself, blessed my
misfortune. I thanked Heaven for it, as

for particular favour, and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recall me. I proposed rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design; and told me, that in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at Madrid. 'There is a thing come into my head,' added he: 'I know a person who can serve you. She is the favourite waiting-woman of the prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt every thing to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison, notwithstanding, the good treatment you receive in it.' — 'Thou art in the right,' answered I; 'go, my friend, and begin this negotiation without loss of time. Would to Heaven we were already in our retreat.'

CHAP. IX.

Scipio returns to Madrid, and procures the Enlargement of Gil Blas, on certain Conditions. What Course they steer together, when they leave the Tower of Segovia, and the Conversation that passed between them.

Scipio set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a literati. I loved, in particular, good books of morality, because I found in them, every moment, passages that flattered my aversion for the court and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me, with a gay air — ‘This time, Signior de Santillane, I bring good news; Madam the nurse interests herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my entreaty, in consideration of an hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her

‘nothing, has promised to ask it of the king
‘his father. I am come hither in a hurry to
‘apprize you of it, and shall return immedi-
‘ately to put the finishing stroke to the work.’
‘So saying he left me, and went back to
‘court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me, that the prince had not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying—
‘My dear Gil Blas! thank Heaven, you are
‘free! the gates of the prison are open to
‘you; but upon two conditions, which per-
‘haps will give you a great deal of pain,
‘and which I am obliged to inform you of,
‘though not without regret. His majesty
‘forbids you to appear at court, and orders
‘you to quit the kingdom of Castile in a
‘month. I am very much mortified that
‘you are prohibited going to court.’—
‘And I am overjoyed at it,’ I replied; ‘God
‘knows what my opinion of it is. I expect-
‘ed but one favour from the king, and I
‘have received two.’

Being assured that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollos, and returned a

thousand thanks to Tordefillas, for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Signior Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way — ‘If we are not rich enough to buy a magnificent estate, we can at least purchase a commodious one.’ — ‘So we had but a hut,’ answered I, ‘I should be satisfied with my condition; for though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend for the future to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Methinks I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in hunting, and sometimes in fishing. — Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is best. A morsel of bread may satisfy us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it, will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centers wholly in ourselves; and this is so true,

‘that the most delicious of my meals are not
‘those in which the greatest delicacy and
‘abundance reign. Frugality is a source of
‘delights, and wonderfully conducive to
‘health.’

‘By your leave, Signior Gil Blas,’ said
my secretary, interrupting me; ‘I am not
‘altogether of your opinion with regard to
‘the pretended frugality you praise so much.
‘Why should we live like Diogenes? If we
‘indulge our appetites a little, we shall not
‘find ourselves a bit the worse for it. Take
‘my advice; and since we have, thank God,
‘wherewithal to render our retreat agreea-
‘ble, let us not make it the habitation of
‘hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall
‘have got possession of our land, we shall
‘fortify our house with good wines, and
‘all other provisions suitable to people of
‘taste, who did not quit the commerce of
‘mankind with a view of renouncing the
‘conveniencies of life, but rather to enjoy
‘them with more tranquillity. “That which
“a man has in his house,” says Hesiod, “ne-
“ver hurts him: whereas, that which he
“has not may. It is better,” adds the same
‘author, “for a man to have all things ne-
“cessary in his possession, than in his wish
‘only.”

‘How the devil, Mr. Scipio!’ cried I,
‘come you to know the Greek poets? Ha!

‘where did you pick up acquaintance with
 ‘Hesiod?’ — ‘In the house of a learned man,’
 ‘he replied: ‘I served a pedant of Salaman-
 ‘ca some time. He was a great commenta-
 ‘tor, and would toss you up a large volume
 ‘in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew,
 ‘Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from
 ‘books in his library, and translated into the
 ‘Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuen-
 ‘sis, I retained in my memory a great num-
 ‘ber of sentences as remarkable as that which
 ‘I repeated.’ — ‘If that be the case,’ said I,
 ‘your memory is well garnished. But, to
 ‘return to our scheme; in what kingdom of
 ‘Spain do you think we should establish our
 ‘philosophical residence?’ — I vote for Ar-
 ‘ragon,’ replied my confidant; ‘we will
 ‘there find charming spots where we may
 ‘lead a delicious life.’ — ‘Well,’ said I, ‘be
 ‘it so. Let us fix in Arragon. I consent to
 ‘the proposal; and I wish we may there find
 ‘a place of abode which will afford all those
 ‘pleasures with which I feast my imagination.’

CHAP X.

*Their Behaviour at Madrid. Gil Blas
 meets a certain Person in the Street.
 The Consequence of that Meeting.*

When we arrived at Madrid, we alight-
 ed at a small house, where Scipio had lod-

ged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. 'I protest to you,' said he, 'I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain; and therefore gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant.' — 'You were in the right,' answered I: 'for, besides that this match is more solid, a citizen who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with Monsieur his son-in-law.'

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the purpose — 'Signior Gabriel,' added I, 'be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles, which — 'Your money is ready for you,' said the goldsmith, interrupting me; and conducting us into his closet, showed us the two bags, with notes upon them, containing these words — 'These bags of doubloons belong to Signior Gil Blas de Santillane.' — 'There they are,' said he, 'just as they were committed to my care,'

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me; and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home,

where we began to examine our double pistols. The tale was just, after having deducted about fifty which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was, to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided ourselves with clothes and linen. While I was going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron de Steinbach, that officer of the German guards in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted that cavalier, who, knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. 'I am extremely glad,' said I to him, 'to see your lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Caesar and Don Alphonso de Leyva.'— 'I can give you a certain account of them both,' answered he; 'for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago they came to town to thank his majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received, in consideration of the services which his ancestors had done the state. He is made governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired any body to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous; and, this shows

‘that our monarch delights in recompensing
‘valour.

Though I knew much better than the Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know any thing of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that, in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with him immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or no he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the baroness; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head with his arms, saying, with marks of real joy — ‘Santillane, have I
‘found you again! I am overjoyed at meeting with you! It was not my fault that ever
‘we parted; for I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. ‘You had no regard to my request; but I
‘am far from being angry with you on that
‘account. I am even beholden to you, for
‘the motive of your retreat: but, since that
‘time, you ought to have let me heard from
‘you, and spared me the trouble of sending
‘in vain to find you at Granada, where Don
‘Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote me
‘you was.’

After this gentle reproach, he continued — ‘Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here! Be assured, that I share as much as ever in what concerns you.’ — ‘Signior,’ answered I, ‘something less than four months ago, I filled a pretty considerable post at court, having had the honour to be secretary and confidant to the Duke of Lerma.’ — ‘Is it possible,’ cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment; ‘what! was you in the confidence of the prime-minister?’ — ‘I gained his favour,’ said I, and ‘lost it in the manner you shall hear.’ I then recounted the whole story, and ended my narration with the resolution I had taken to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Caesar having listened very attentively, replied — ‘My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of Fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate, which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place; and it is a present which we are in a condition of making, without incommoding ourselves in the least. I dare answer for my father’s con-

‘sent, and I know that it will give great pleasure to Seraphina.’

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and more charmed with the goodness of his heart, than with the value of his favour — ‘Signior,’ said I, ‘your behaviour enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you; and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgment.’ My governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pretended service was. I told him; and the information redoubled his surprize. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by my interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity — ‘Gil Blas,’ said he, ‘since I owe my post to you, I don’t intend to confine my gratuity to the little farm of Lirias; I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly.’

‘Halt there, Signior Alphonso,’ said I, interrupting him; ‘don’t awake my avarice. I have too well experienced, that riches serve only to corrupt my morals. I accept,

‘with all my heart, your farm of Lirias,
‘where I will live comfortably with the mo-
‘ney which I have already in my possession.
‘But that is sufficient, and, far from desi-
‘ring more, I would rather consent to lose
‘the superfluity of what I possess. Riches
‘are a burden to one in retirement, who
‘seeks only to enjoy quiet.’

While we conversed in this manner, Don Caesar coming in expressed as much joy at seeing me as his son had done before, and when he understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary’s house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and, signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to the house of Baron de Steinbach, and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. ‘How much,’ said he, may ‘this small dominion be worth?’ — ‘Five

hundred ducats per annum,' I replied: 'and I can assure thee, it as a lovely solitude, which I know perfectly well; having been there several times in quality of steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalaviar, in a small hamlet, in the midst of a charming country.'

'What pleases me still more in it,' cried Scipio, 'is, that we shall have fine venison, with wine of Bernicarlo, and excellent Muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage.'— 'I long as much as thou dost to be there,' I replied; 'but I must first make a tour to the Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I failed in my duty.' Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. 'Let us lose no time,' said he; 'I have already secured a chaise, let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo.'— 'Yes, my friend,' I replied; 'let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my

‘being. Our journey will not be long.
‘We shall soon see ourselves settled in our
‘hamlet: where, when we arrive, I will
‘write over the door of my house these two
‘Latin verses in letters of gold —

*‘Inveni portum! Spes et fortuna valete!
‘Sat me lufistis, ludite nunc alios.’*

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



Le Sage, Alain René,

The adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane

Bd.: 3

London [u.a.] 1806

Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek -- L.fr.o.63-aa(2)
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11718858-2